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OUR PIONEERS
VIII
RICHARD HODGSON (1855-1905)
BY W. H. SALTER

RICHARD HODGSON's title to be numbered among the Pioneers of psychical research rests less on his philosophic grasp of principles, in which he was not the equal of the Sidgwicks, Myers, Gurney or William James, than on the extent and variety of the research he did between the founding of the Society, which he joined in its first year (1882), and his death in 1905. Much of his work was done under conditions of particular difficulty, and parts of it provoked controversies which still reverberate. This is in part due to his having specialized during the first half of his career in the study of 'physical phenomena', where disputes have always raged with unique acrimony, and partly to his uncompromising determination to take his own line, exemplified in a trivial matter by his choice of brown as the colour for his dress suit.

Born in Australia in 1855, he took the degrees of M.A. and LL.D. at Melbourne University, and in 1878 entered St John's College, Cambridge. At Cambridge he became a pupil of Henry Sidgwick, and took an honours degree in Moral Sciences in 1881. He also studied for several months at Jena University. He first became prominent in psychical research in 1884 when he was co-opted as a member of the S.P.R. Committee investigating 'phenomena connected with the Theosophical Society'. After examining Mme Blavatsky and some of her followers, the Committee were inclined to give a cautious assent to some of the marvels alleged, but considered it essential that investigations should be pursued in India, where the Theosophical headquarters were situate. Hodgson was therefore sent out to India, at Sidgwick's expense,

and spent three months there towards the end of 1884 and in the early part of 1885. This is not the place to review the conclusion he reached and embodied in a long report (*Proc.* 3 pp. 207-382, see in particular pp. 312, 313) that the whole case for the genuineness of the phenomena rested on a complex of deliberate fraud and false evidence, inaccuracy of observation and memory, and excessive credulity. Theosophists have always challenged these conclusions which they impute to the S.P.R. notwithstanding its time-honoured policy of never expressing a corporate opinion.

At every point Hodgson was confronted with difficulties. The most direct evidence against Mme Blavatsky came from two ex-officials of the Theosophical Society, M. and Mme Coulomb, who claimed to have been her confederates. As witnesses they were obviously suspect. Hodgson, testing their evidence in every way possible, considered it true, but declined to rely on any statements of theirs that could not be verified independently. Then there was the 'shrine', in which many marvels of the apport kind were said to have occurred, a wooden cabinet backing on to a wall at a point where there had been at one time an opening into Mme Blavatsky's bedroom. When Hodgson arrived he found that this opening was blocked up and that the 'shrine' had been removed by the faithful and burnt. When removing it the faithful, or some of them, were surprised to find a moveable panel in the back. If the phenomena really were genuine, the Theosophists seem to have taken great pains to convert a man who started not unfavourably disposed to them into a whole-hearted opponent.

A more serious criticism may be levelled at Hodgson's attempt to explain Mme Blavatsky's motives. He considered it more than possible that her object in India was to spread disaffection towards British rule. It was a time of acute Russo-British tension in Asia, and some of the words and writings of Mme Blavatsky and of her associates lent colour to Hodgson's suspicion. His weakness lay in assuming that in the character which he attributed to her of impostor and unofficial Russian agent she could not also have been a prophetess. This over-simple psychological judgment is the counterpart of that shown by her followers who, finding comfort in her doctrines, indignantly repudiate any suggestion that their prophetess could have used fraud to promote them.

While in India Hodgson investigated the methods of Indian jugglers, thereby acquiring knowledge that served him well when on his return to England he began to give a more systematic study to 'physical phenomena' than they had till then received. The principal product of this was the long paper entitled 'The Possibilities of Mal-Observation and Lapse of Memory from a

Practical Point of View' which he and S. J. Davey contributed to *Proceedings* (4, pp. 381-495: see also 8, pp. 253-310). The phenomena of the 'slate-writing' medium Eglinton were reproduced by normal means before a series of sitters, who were not told whether or not they were witnessing real paranormal occurrences, but were asked to record exactly what they had seen. The paper analysed their replies, pointing out in detail the types of mistake that enable clever pieces of trickery to get accepted as genuine phenomena. It remains, I think, the most informative document on this subject. Together with other reports throwing doubt on Eglinton it led to a violent controversy and the secession of several prominent members of the Society.

In 1887 he went to America as Secretary of the American S.P.R., which in 1890 joined forces with our own Society in a union which continued until shortly after his death. He found the American way of life most congenial, particularly the informal good-fellowship of the Tavern Club, Boston, where he spent much of his time. It was in America that his most important piece of research, the investigation of Mrs Piper, was carried out. He continued however to keep in close touch with developments in this country and on the continent.

He was, for example, critical of the reports of the continental sittings with Eusapia Palladino, arguing that the experimenters had taken inadequate precautions against a recognized form of trickery, whereby a medium contrived to get a hand or foot free of control, while the experimenters believed that control of both hands or both feet was being maintained. He considered that the accounts he received from the S.P.R. Committee investigating Eusapia at Cambridge in 1895 showed that the same sort of trickery was being employed by her there. Accordingly on the invitation of the Committee he came over to take part in the investigation, and convinced the Committee that it was. Suggestions, impossible after this lapse of time to test, have been made that he did not treat either the medium or his colleagues fairly.

Myers and Lodge continued to accept phenomena occurring elsewhere with Eusapia as genuine, but one result of the Cambridge sittings was to confirm as S.P.R. policy Sidgwick's view that the Society should not undertake the investigation of any medium against whom deliberate fraud had been proved. This was not an assertion of the principle *falsus in uno falsus in omnibus*, which cannot be maintained where the activities concerned are sub-conscious, but an attempt to strengthen mediums against the temptation to gratify credulous or sensation-seeking investigators by the use of trickery to supplement genuine powers when these

did not come up to their sitter's expectations. The policy depended for its success on its general adoption by investigating bodies and persons. Failing this, after the deaths of Sidgwick and Hodgson it was abandoned, not without considerable hesitation.

In America Hodgson took part in the investigation of two important cases of dual personality, the Ansel Bourne case (*Proc.* 7) and the Lurancy Vennum ('Watseka Wonder') case of pseudo-possession (*Journ.* 10, pp. 98-104). His main work was however the investigation of Mrs Piper whose mediumship began in 1884 and soon secured the favourable attention of William James. Mrs Piper paid a short visit to England in the winter of 1889-90, but with that exception her sittings were continuously under Hodgson's supervision from his arrival in America until his death, his sole supervision apart from help given by William James in the first few years. He was himself a sitter, introduced other sitters, often acted as note-taker where communications were made orally and not through automatic writing, pressed the sitters to annotate the records properly, verified statements made in the communications, and did his best to reduce the whole to an orderly combination of fact, comment and theory, such as he presented in the two long papers published in *Proceedings*, 8 and 13. The latter volume gives the results of the investigation until 1897.

Mrs Piper's mediumship was most complex, and no previous attempt had been made to analyse any mediumship with equal fullness. It would have been an almost superhuman task for one man to handle, even if he received the fullest support from the sitters. Hodgson however found the greatest difficulty in getting some of the sitters to annotate their records candidly or carefully, and met with several flat refusals to permit publication. During the later stages of the investigation he had practically, it is said, to finance the research by selling sittings to sitters whom he regarded as unsatisfactory but who were willing to pay for them in order to obtain emotional satisfaction. He fell into arrears with his own annotations and took to making brief notes in a code which meant something to him, but proved of little help to his successors after his sudden death.

This was the period when Mrs Piper's main Controls were the 'Imperator Band' who claimed to be identical with the Controls of the same names who had been an important feature in the mediumship of Stainton Moses. They were able to produce little evidence to substantiate this claim, but one of them, Rector, though unable to identify himself with any person who had ever lived on earth, was in the judgment of William James an extraordinarily impressive personality with superior capacities to those

of Mrs Piper in her ordinary state. His psychological status obviously raises questions of very great interest and difficulty. Brief references to him are made in Hodgson's second report (see *Proc.* 13 p. 409) but most regrettably Hodgson never lived to write the further report there forecast.

He came however to accept completely, though after much intellectual struggle and hesitation, the view that the Emperor Band really were spirits, and not just dramatizations of Mrs Piper's subconscious. In a private letter written in 1901, an extract from which is printed in one of the obituary notices (*Proc.* 19, p. 369), he explains his position.

I went through toils and turmoils and perplexities in '97 and '98 about the significance of the whole Emperor régime, but I seemed to get on a rock after that,—I seemed to understand clearly the reasons for incoherence and obscurity, etc., and I think that if for the rest of my life from now I should never see another trance or have another word from Emperor or his group, it would make no difference to my *knowledge* that all is well, that Emperor, etc., are all they claim to be and are indeed messengers that we may call divine.

Hodgson's views as to this did not pass unchallenged by those who, like Mrs Sidgwick, agreed with him to the extent of accepting that the veridical statements made by the ostensible Communicators in the Piper mediumship could not be attributed to any kind of telepathy between the living, for which there was experimental evidence, and therefore gave some support to a belief in survival. The Piper Controls were in her view guilty not only of the 'incoherence and obscurity' that Hodgson mentions, but of absurdities and flat mis-statements of fact which pointed to 'the confusion of a person talking about what he does not understand', not the confusion of a person who knows, but has a 'difficulty in expressing himself': (*Proc.* 15, 33).

That Hodgson should accept so implicitly the reality of the Piper trance-personalities caused much surprise in view of the sceptical line he had followed in relation to Mme Blavatsky, Eglington and Eusapia. Later he took the same negative attitude to Mrs Thompson, a medium of whom Myers held the highest opinion. With Mrs Piper no question as to her integrity arose, but in her case, as in that of Mme Blavatsky and Mrs Thompson, he may be criticized for a lack of subtlety in assessing motives and unusual psychological states. In a passage often quoted William James described Mrs Piper as the 'white crow' who disproved the assumption that paranormal knowledge was never conveyed in

trance. To Hodgson she was the white ewe lamb in a flock of black, or, at best, grey sheep.

In 1896 Myers arranged that the completion of *Human Personality* should be in Hodgson's hands in case of his death before its publication. Unfortunately he does not seem before his death in 1901 to have come to a clear understanding with Hodgson either as to the latter's remuneration or as to which of the 'Communications' he had himself received through various mediums could be made public. The weakness of the book at the crucial point where direct evidence of communication might have been expected has long been noted, but the fault did not lie with Hodgson or Alice Johnson who collaborated with him in this extremely difficult task.

Hodgson carried on into middle life the physical activities of a young man, and it was this that caused his sudden death in 1905 at the age of 50. On the 20th of December of that year, after typically vigorous argument in defence of freedom of opinion at his beloved Tavern Club, he played a ball-game which brought on a fatal heart attack, and his dead body was brought back to the Club which had contributed so largely to his enjoyment of life.

LINKED PRECOGNITIVE DREAMS OF A MURDER?

BY IAN STEPHENS

Our contributor Mr Ian Stephens has had a distinguished career on the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent. At the time of writing, he was Director of the Historical Section, G.H.Q., Pakistan Army. Earlier, he had been Editor of The Statesman newspaper (Calcutta and Delhi), 1942-51; and before that, Director of Public Information with the old (British) Government of India. Between 1952 and '58 he was a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge.

From a letter to our Secretary, written from Rawalpindi and dated 10 Feb. 1960, we quote the following extracts:

'SIR,—Enclosed herewith are the papers listed below about a recent occurrence here in Rawalpindi, which may perhaps be of interest to the Society

'There has been virtually no collaboration between Captain Curtis Welborn and me over the writing of our respective notes or statements. Neither of us has seen the other's text while it was

under compilation. I *read* out to him the first few paragraphs of mine, soon after they had been written; however, thereafter we agreed to desist from any such procedure, as soon as the case began to seem to be getting more important than we'd at first supposed.

(signed IAN STEPHENS')

List of documents enclosed with the above letter:

- (1) Composite note and P.S. dated partly 5 Feb. and partly 6 Feb. and signed by Ian Stephens, with a P.P.S. dated 10 Feb.
- (2) Signed statement by Capt. Curtis Welborn.
- (3) Signed statement by Mr Irshad Ali Khan.
- (4) Original cutting from the *Pakistan Times* of 6 Feb.
- (5) Two sketch-maps prepared by Capt. Welborn.

Document No. 1

'Since last summer (1959), while living in Flashman's Hotel at Rawalpindi, I have usually shared a table for dinner in the evening with Capt. Curtis Welborn, formerly of the 15th U.S.A.A.F., and now of the American Army serving here in U.S.M.A.A.G. . . .

'After finishing breakfast this morning (5 Feb.) I met him on my way out of the dining-room, and he mentioned he had had a vivid dream. It was something to do with the Korean war all over again, with bloodshed going on, except that he was aware that the war was a new one.

'I said, what a funny thing! I was woken up by a dream last night; and I then described it, which had been as follows:

I was in a house, and was aware of a screaming in the fields outside, and knew it was a murder going on. I then entered a room. In front of me was a bed, with a living person on it, his feet directly towards me and not much else of him visible. He lay beneath a half-opened window, which somehow I knew he had climbed through, the window being in front of me as I stood in the doorway. The person in the bed was my best friend—though *who*, I didn't know; no identification suggested itself. And suddenly I realised that it was he who had just done the murder in the fields outside. What a horrid quandary for me: my best friend a murderer. What would happen; and what should I do? And the unpleasant jolt of it woke me up. It had been at 3.15 a.m. and I hadn't been to sleep since.

'When I mentioned the time to Curtis Welborn he said how very odd, he had noticed it was exactly 3.15 a.m. when he woke up too. I passed the matter off with some pleasantries, . . . and left the

dining-room. But after a few steps I went back to say that, really, the coincidence in time was rather remarkable, and that I thought we ought to take a note of it, because it almost seemed as if, somehow, his dream and mine had got telepathically jumbled up, since both of them involved slaughter.

'A draft of the foregoing sentences was accordingly dictated by me in my office during the morning. Those that follow are being written the same evening.

'In the afternoon, when I returned to my rooms in the hotel about 3.30 p.m. from a walk, my orderly Ali Marjan told me that a murder had just been done in the street outside the hotel, and that the body of the dead man was lying there on a charpoi (Pakistani string-bed). He *said* this had happened at 3.15; however, he has no watch, and later information suggests that the time had been a good deal earlier. He also said that the murderer and his victim, both of them employees in a tailor's shop, had been good friends and first-cousins, but had quarrelled over money.

'Soon afterwards, Curtis Welborn called at my rooms to report the news and to say he was much astonished at such a thing having happened, because of our both having had vivid dreams of bloodshed or murder the night before. Apparently something had impelled him, during the afternoon, to go out from his sitting-room to his verandah, and, at that very moment the murderer, whom he saw, had rushed through the hotel premises with people in pursuit.

'After tea, I had to go out in my car; and being in rather a hurry and not particularly wanting to see either gaping crowds or a corpse, I told my driver to take the turn out into Lawrence Road instead of the one into the Mall. Wrongly, I had assumed that the tailor's shop in or beside which the murder had been done was Abdul Aziz's shop on the corner between the Mall and Canning Road. Instead, it had in fact been done at a smaller shop nearer to the hotel, in Lawrence Road itself; and there, as soon as we turned out, stood the gaping crowd. As we passed by I could see, placed between two walls in a narrow alleyway that ran back at right angles from the road, a string-bed; and on it lay the dead body of a person, his feet directly towards me, and not much else of him visible.

'My driver pointed the body out to me. He had already been to have a look at the scene, after the murder happened. He did not know my reason for not wanting to take the turn into the Mall, which we usually do; I simply gave him the order . . . The time was 4.50. . . .

(signed) IAN STEPHENS
Rawalpindi. 5 Feb. 1960'

Postscript (written 6 Feb.)

'Here are some facts ascertained later, and a few reflections:

'The murder was done on the side-walk outside the row of little shops (see sketch-map "A"). A pool of half-dried blood there today showed the exact place. Not long afterwards, the body must have been placed on the string-bed, and carried into the alleyway. There is reason also to think that, after having been placed in the alleyway, the body was moved again (see sketch-map "B"). Curtis Welborn says that, when he went out of the hotel about 3.45 or 4 p.m. yesterday to look at the scene of the affair, the body (in the alleyway) had the back of its head pointing towards him. When I saw it, glancing out from my car as I passed by about 4.50 p.m., it had its *feet* pointing towards me. (Just conceivably I am mistaken in this, but I don't think so). The explanation may be that the alleyway, as you look into it from Lawrence Road, points roughly speaking South-West, that's to say, in the direction of Mecca. The dead man's friends, between about 4 p.m. and 4.50 p.m., perhaps thought it proper to turn the string-bed round, so that its feet were not disrespectfully directed at the holy city.

'Walking past the entrance to the alleyway this morning—a place I've never paid attention to before—I was struck by the fact that, as one glances in, one could almost imagine that someone with poor eyesight might suppose he was looking into a room which had a big half-opened window at the end. There is an arch over the entrance; this vaguely conveys a notion of the alleyway being roofed-over, though actually it isn't. On either side of the alleyway are walls . . . and at a right-angle to them, blocking the end of the alleyway as one looks in, is a third wall, less tall—and then a space of empty air, beyond which, at some distance, the view is completed by a two-storeyed building which rises to a considerable height. This building, as I looked in, stood in shadow; but the top of the third wall—the one that blocks the end of the alleyway—was brightly caught by sunshine pouring in from the left. This thin, bright-lit line of the wall-top bisected the view horizontally. And I don't think it's mere inventiveness to suggest that—together with the impression conveyed by the masonry arch of the alleyway being roofed—the horizontal line, cutting the view completely into two sections, an upper and a lower, might for a moment have made any dim-sighted person, or a dreamer, think he was looking into a long low room the entire end of which consisted of a big window, half-opened. And the positions of the bed and the body, in this view and in my dream, were identical.

'So much for the freshly-ascertained facts, and a surmise from one of them. Now for two general reflections.

'First, though what I saw in my dream did rather strikingly resemble what my eyes later saw in reality, there was a major distortion or reversal of truth, as regards what the main significant visual object in it *represented*. In the dream, the person lying on the bed was alive, and a murderer; in reality he was dead, and the murderer's recent victim. I'm myself particularly interested in this point because, on previous occasions, when I've had odd experiences of apparently a 'psychical' sort, they have involved similar baffling distortions or displacements. It has been almost as if, though one has been given a momentary glimpse into the future, the main elements in the picture had, at the same time, been so shifted or transposed as to make recognition of what was going to happen difficult or impossible.

'The other reflection, perhaps of more scientific importance, is that, this time, the moment of partial foreknowledge, dimly given in my dream, seems to have communicated itself, in jumbled form, to the mind of my friend Curtis Welborn at exactly the same time, and strongly enough to wake both of us up. (Usually I am a sound sleeper, and unlikely—though I rise early—to wake with a start quite so early as 3.15; and so, I understand, is he). And whereas, on previous occasions of odd or "psychical" experience, I seem to have been a passive, receiving agent, on which forces from outside unaccountably impinged, this time the evidence rather suggests that—since the substance of my dream resembled what soon afterwards happened more closely than the substance of Curtis's dream did—I was in part not merely a receiver, but a transmitter.

'Two small points in conclusion. The first is that the two tailors involved, the murderer and the victim, were entirely unknown to both Welborn and me, and that neither of us had ever entered, or particularly noticed, the little shop in which they were employed. (It's one among a row). This point, I see, isn't brought out in what I wrote yesterday. The other point, also not brought out, is that during Friday morning (5 Feb.) I mentioned having had my dream, not only to Welborn and to my secretary, Mr Irshad Ali Khan, but to my orderly Ali Marjan. I didn't describe it to him in any detail, but it's a fact that I spoke of it, and (as I've ascertained today) that he recalls my having done so.

(signed) IAN STEPHENS'

Additional Postscript (written 10 Feb.)

'It appears that on the morning of 5 Feb. I mentioned having a vivid dream about a murder, not only to my orderly Ali Marjan,

but to my motor-driver Mohammad Sharif. I've myself no recollection at all of doing this; but the subject of the murder itself cropped up conversationally between the two of them and me this morning, when we drove to Lloyds Bank past the scene of the affair, and Sharif is positive that I did so. There are thus four people to testify that I spoke of experiencing a dream about a murder shortly before a publicly rather dramatic murder did in fact occur.

(signed) IAN STEPHENS'

Document No. 2

We append the following extracts from Captain Curtis Welborn's statement written from Flashman's Hotel, Rawalpindi and dated 8 Feb. 1960.

'... In the early morning of Friday, 5 Feb. 1960, I dreamed I was once again in Korea (I have been there twice). There was a war going on and I knew it was a new war. I knew I was not dwelling in the past. I did not know exactly where in Korea I was, but I was moving slowly down a dirt road in the midst of a crowd of indigenous people. I retain the impression of ox-carts and of men and women dressed in the traditional clothes of the Korean folk and that we were walking through the countryside. The dream was extremely hazy, the images only partially formed, but I knew there was a feeling of violence and disaster all around me. The dream seemed to last but a moment and then it quickly faded and I awoke. It was so ugly a prospect and it had seemed so real that it made me uneasy. So I turned on my table lamp and looked at my watch. The time was exactly 0315 hours. I then turned out the light and fell into dreamless sleep for the rest of the night.

'As I was getting up that morning—at 0630 hours—I thought about the unpleasant dream and at this writing remember distinctly that I reminded myself as I got out of bed that I had waked up at 0315 hours. At about 0700 hours I went into the hotel dining room to have breakfast... Mr Stephens was approaching me for the exchange of morning greetings... I did not wait for him to speak but blurted out the account of my dream. He then sat down at my table and told me he had had a better one—about a murder...'

Captain Welborn then goes on to relate the substance of his conversation with Mr Stephens, which on all factual points tallies very closely with the detailed account already given in Document No. 1; and he describes how, in the afternoon, from the small covered porch of his room, he actually saw the murderer running through the grounds of the hotel, with another man in pursuit; and how later, he went to the shop where the crime was committed. Captain Welborn concludes with the following comments:

'This account was written from notes made in the evening of 5 February 1960. Points in this occurrence which made considerable impression on me:

- a. Mr Stephens and I awoke from our respective dreams at the exact same time.
- b. There was violence in both dreams.
- c. There was an element of friendship in Mr Stephens' dream and in the real murder.
- d. For whatever reason, the body of the murdered man was turned round between the time I saw it and the time when Mr Stephens saw it—as if somehow the arrangement in Mr Stephens' dream were being accommodated.

(signed) CURTIS R. WELBORN, JR
Captain, Infantry, USAR'

Document No. 3

Extracts from a statement made by Irshad Ali Khan, Secretary to Mr Ian Stephens and dated 13 Feb. 1960.

'I testify that, first thing on morning of 5 Feb. 1960, about 7.40 a.m. (the G.H.Q. opens at 7.30) Mr Ian Stephens . . . dictated to me a first draft of paras. 1 to 6 inclusive of his note dated 5 Feb.¹ The remaining paragraphs of his note were I understand done by him in manuscript later that day, and were typed by me the next day, 6 Feb., when he also brought in to office, with this new manuscript as described, the original typescript draft which I'd done of paras. 1-6, he having made some minor corrections and polishings on them, of the sort he normally does on drafts. But these minor corrections etc. involved no major alteration on any point of fact. He also, on Feb. 6, for formality's sake, signed the written material in my presence.

His dictation to me on the morning of 5 Feb. was followed by an oral retelling of his dream and what had passed between him and an American Officer, Capt. Curtis Welborn.

Next day, i.e. on 6 Feb., when we came again to the dream affair, I felt he was all the more disturbed. On my enquiry he said that I would know in full when I would type the fresh manuscript paragraphs which he had now brought; but that a murder had taken place (I had myself at that time not heard the news of it) quite near to the hotel . . . I read the news the same day in the issue of *The Pakistan Times*. . . .

(signed) IRSHAD ALI KHAN
13-2-1960'

¹ i.e. paras. 1-4 inclusive of the abbreviated version of Mr. Stephens' note, as reproduced in this article.—Ed.

Document No. 4

A cutting from page 1 of *The Pakistan Times* dated 6 Feb. 1960

'TAILOR MURDERED BY COUSIN

(By a Staff Reporter)

Lawrence Road, the busy shopping centre of Rawalpindi Cantt., was the scene of a gruesome murder on Friday afternoon when a young tailor Jaleel was stabbed to death by his cousin.

A few but fatal stabs inflicted on Jaleel by the alleged assailant Sajjad resulted in the instantaneous death of the former.

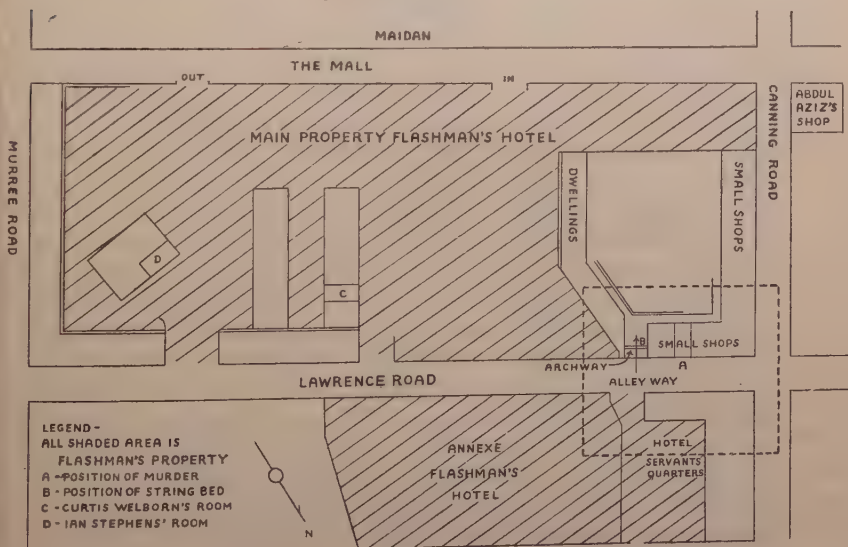
It is stated that Jaleel, who worked at his uncle's shop, quarrelled with his cousin Sajjad . . . Sajjad is reported to have visited the shop and called out Jaleel and, it is alleged, thrust a knife in his chest. The assailant tried to escape but was soon caught . . .'

Document No. 5

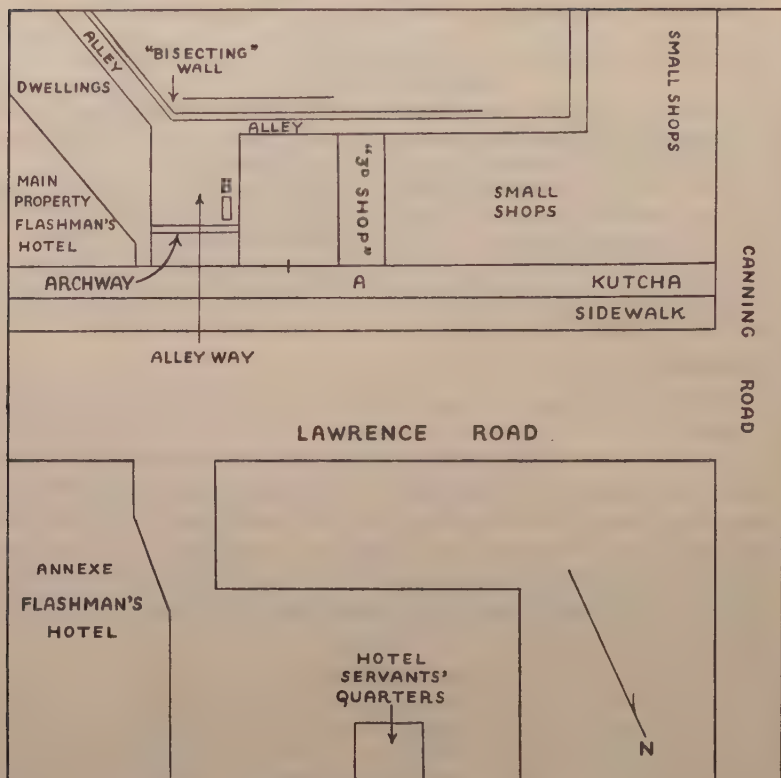
Two sketch maps prepared by Captain Welborn reproduced herewith.

(In subsequent correspondence the question was raised of the frequency of murders in Rawalpindi. Mr Stephens stated that, although he did not know the official statistics, he would consider a daylight murder in the Lawrence Road/Mall area, about as unusual as one would be in the main streets of Aldershot. Rawalpindi has long been a major garrison town, and is well policed by both the military and civil powers.—Ed.)

SKETCH MAP A



SKETCH MAP B



A FENLAND POLTERGEIST

BY

A. D. CORNELL AND ALAN GAULD

IN October 1957 A.D.C. was requested by the S.P.R. to investigate the alleged haunting of Hannath Hall near Wisbech, Cambridgeshire. Between November 1957 and January 1960 we visited the house twelve times, and on five occasions were accompanied by other members of the S.P.R. and C.U.S.R.P. (Cambridge University Society for Research in Parapsychology). The dates of the twelve visits are given in the appendix.

Hannath Hall is a large brick-built farmhouse; the ground floor contains three living rooms, a kitchen, and a disused washroom, and the first floor a gallery from which various rooms open out, five bedrooms, a study and a bathroom (see diagram 1). Legend has it that a certain Jonathan Hannath, who owned the Hall and adjacent farmlands in the early nineteenth century, left the body of his wife laid out in bedroom A for six weeks after her death, and had meals sent up to her by the servants. Since then it is said no one has been able to spend a restful night in the room.

We have not been able to discover the origins and authenticity of this legend, nor have we obtained much evidence that paranormal phenomena occurred in the house before the tenancy of Mr P. who took up residence at Hannath Hall in August 1957, and left in January 1960. His household consisted of his wife, their two children K. and E. (aged three and five respectively at the time of our first visit), and Mrs P.'s mother, Mrs R.H. Mrs P. and Mrs R.H. described a number of curious occurrences in the house. These phenomena were mostly auditory and nocturnal; Mrs P. told us that she had heard raps, thumps, groans and sounds like footsteps. Mrs R.H. said that she had several times heard regular tappings from the upstairs rooms, while she herself had been in the living-room downstairs. One night, about 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning, she heard several loud crashes on her bedroom door, and on another occasion at about the same time, she was woken up when her bed received a violent jolt. Mr P., who was usually at home only at weekends, has never heard anything abnormal himself, but told us that his mother had cut short a stay in the house because of the alarming dreams she had had. All these personal family experiences occurred in the months August–November 1957.

A representative of the local newspaper, Mr A. Wilmot, got stranded at H.H. in bad weather and learned of the curious happenings; he published an account of them, and contacted the

S.P.R., who passed the case to us. We witnessed ostensibly paranormal phenomena on our first two visits to Hannath Hall; the accounts that follow are based on notes taken on the spot by the investigators present, and on signed statements which we wrote shortly afterwards. The experiments described in the assessment of the phenomena were scattered among all twelve visits.

First Visit. 16-17 November 1957

We were accompanied by Mr D. J. Murray (then secretary of the C.U.S.R.P.) and Mr J. M. Brotherton (a member of the same Society). We arrived at about 10.30 p.m., together with Mr A. Wilmot and two of his friends, Mr T. Trumpess and Mr D. Perryman. Mr and Mrs P. had not yet come in and we were received by Mrs R.H. The children were asleep in bedroom C. Mr and Mrs P. returned shortly after 11 p.m. Between 11 and 12 we carefully examined both the interior and the exterior of the house.

Shortly before midnight we began a ouija-board seance in the living-room; not that any of those present had 'spiritualistic' leanings but we have found from experience that this is a useful and unobtrusive way of gathering together all the occupants of a house and watching them. A.O.G. meanwhile stationed himself in the gallery outside the door of bedroom A. At 12.08 a.m. he heard a sharp snap from inside bedroom A, the door of which was open. He set the noise down to thermal changes, and did not investigate. At 12.10 he heard a sound like someone in carpet slippers softly ascending the stairs; the steps ceased before reaching the top of the stairs; A.O.G. went to the stairs and found no one on them; he concluded that he might have misinterpreted noises from downstairs. At 12.32 he returned downstairs.

At 1.25, whilst the others continued the ouija-board seance in the living room, we (A.D.C. and A.O.G.) went into bedroom A and searched it by the light of our torches. Bedroom A had no electricity, and was at that time being used to store furniture. Its southern half contained several large packing cases (whose contents we investigated), some piles of books, several chairs, a washstand and a large chest of drawers. The northern half was relatively clear; there were two mattresses lying end to end; (as in the diagram). Against the western wall there leaned a dismantled bed, and along the northern wall there stood a line of wooden chairs and a dressing table.

At about 1.35 we lay down on the two mattresses, feet to feet, A.D.C. taking the western one. We extinguished our torches. A few minutes later we heard gentle taps coming from position 3 on the bedroom floor; our torches showed nothing but bare

boards in the region concerned. We asked for, and obtained, specific numbers of taps, and then suggested a code of one rap for 'yes', two raps for 'no'. The raps became louder and moved to position 1. The rapper claimed to be a woman who had been murdered in the house in 1906. She answered leading questions readily, but could not spell out coherent messages. We then heard a series of six or seven loud knocks, coming once again from position 3. They grew so violent that A.O.G. flashed his torch in their direction. The knocks ceased instantly, but we could see nothing to account for them.

The ouija-board seance in the living-room continued until about 1.45 a.m. The reporter and his two friends then departed, and J.M.B. and D.J.M. came up to the gallery. They heard the raps coming from bedroom A. J.M.B. ran downstairs, leaving D.J.M. outside the door of bedroom A, and found Mr and Mrs P. with Mrs R.H. sitting round the table in the living-room; he then rejoined D.J.M., who informed him that the raps had continued throughout his brief absence. Both immediately went downstairs and searched the washroom underneath bedroom A.

J.M.B. and D.J.M. made so much noise during these manoeuvres, that we decided to ask them to be quieter. We went towards the door, A.O.G. leading with A.D.C. just behind. A.O.G. reached the door and there was a thud behind us. We turned round and saw by the light of A.D.C.'s torch that a wooden dining-room chair, which had been stacked on a packing case in the position shown in the diagram, was now lying on the mattresses about five feet from its original position. A.O.G. left the room, whilst A.D.C. picked up the chair and replaced it. A.D.C. turned to follow A.O.G., then heard the chair fall again; this time, however, it had simply dropped at the foot of the packing case on which he had stacked it. He replaced it more firmly, and we went downstairs. It was then about 2.00 a.m.

At about 2.10 we returned to bedroom A. D.J.M. and Mrs P. went into the washroom; they searched it and remained there. Mr P. and J.M.B. went into the gallery, whilst Mrs R.H. was left on her own in the living-room. We soon heard loud raps, this time from position 2; these raps were also heard by D.J.M. and Mrs P. in the room below, and D.J.M. was able to note down some of the sequences. The rapper confirmed some of the information she had previously given. We enquired the month of her death, and heard eleven raps. We then asked the day of the month and heard sixteen raps. (D.J.M. in the washroom had just noted that the time was 2.25 when he heard this lengthy series of raps); at the sixteenth rap A.D.C. put on his torch, and the raps

ceased instantly. He remarked that the raps were approaching him. He put out his torch, and we asked the rapper to begin again at 10; the raps were much fainter, and continued from 11 to 18. We then tried to ascertain the rapper's age at death, but obtained contradictory answers. The raps grew very faint and finally died away. About five minutes later we returned downstairs. It was then 2.45.

Meanwhile, at about 2.15, the journalist and his two friends had returned to the house. Mr P. and J.M.B. let them in; they said that their car had broken down. J.M.B. returned to the gallery, accompanied by one of the reporter's friends. This left Mr P., Mrs R.H., Mr Wilmot and his other friend in the living room. Mr P. offered to drive the journalist and his friend to Wisbech, and they all left the house at about 2.20 a.m. D.J.M. saw the car leave. At 2.30 J.M.B. returned to the living-room, and found Mrs R.H. on her own. Mr P. returned to the house at 2.50.

At 3.45 we returned to bedroom A accompanied by D.J.M. A.O.G. walked into the room first, D.J.M. followed him, and A.D.C. brought up the rear. A.D.C. slammed the door and we heard a sharp rattle. We turned and saw that a brass toasting fork about 18 in. long had been thrust behind the metal plate to which the door bolt was attached; one of its prongs was inserted through the iron loop into which the bolt should have run, thus 'bolting' us into the room.

We removed the toasting fork, and sat down on the mattresses. There were no further phenomena. We left the room at about 4.10, and settled down to sleep. At daylight we searched the room again, but could find nothing to account for the phenomena we had witnessed.

Second Visit. 21-22 November 1957

We were accompanied by three members of the C.U.S.R.P. D. J. Murray, A. Hickling and I. Hacking. We arrived at 11.30 p.m. Mr A. Wilmot and his two friends were again present. They arrived at about 11.45 p.m. and left at 1.30 a.m. Their movements were most carefully checked.

The house was carefully searched and the washroom sealed. At 12.10 a.m. we took up positions in bedroom A and I. Hacking stationed himself in the loft immediately above bedroom A. At about 1.30 we twice asked for three knocks and both times heard three faint and muffled knocks which seemed to come from the washroom below. At 1.27 D. J. Murray who was in the living-room, heard eight faint knocks from the direction of bedroom A; but none of the others in the living-room (Mr & Mrs P., Mrs

R.H., A. Hickling, the reporter and his two friends) heard them.

At 2.20 a.m. A. Hickling replaced I. Hacking in the loft, and Hacking and Murray replaced A.D.C. and A.O.G. in bedroom A. At 2.45 a.m. I.H. and D.J.M. heard six muffled knocks. No other phenomena occurred, and the watch was terminated at 4.30 a.m.

Assessment of phenomena

Although the phenomena which we experienced on our second visit were very slight, they cannot be entirely discounted. The controls on the second night were far stricter than on the first; the occupants of the house had been gathered into a single room and the washroom and adjacent doors carefully sealed. Indeed, the precautions taken on our second investigation highlight some of the deficiencies of the first.

When we began our first investigation we were far too sceptical, and we prepared no plan about what to do should phenomena occur. As a result D.J.M. and J.M.B. did not check the times of events and the movements of persons as closely as required in such an investigation, and did not examine the exterior of the house at all; we did not bring a tape recorder, and failed to make one or two obvious tests of the paranormality of the raps, like requesting for example, raps on particular objects, or numbers of raps to match numbers of fingers held up in the darkness.

We cannot come to any satisfactory conclusion about the toasting fork. To throw or even thrust it into that position was exceedingly difficult, but we found that if we placed it behind the metal plate with its prongs just shaving the staple and slammed the door, it would jump a little, and 'bolt' us in. Someone could have placed the fork in the necessary position whilst we were absent from the room between 2.45 and 3.34.

We are unable to explain the first of the chair movements; there were no threads or other devices attached to the chair, and yet it had travelled for several feet. When it moved the second time it merely tumbled over, and may have done so simply because A.D.C. had not replaced it properly.

The rappings were ostensibly the work of an intelligence. In general they did not occur whilst we were asking questions; they came in an even tempo, at a rate of one a second or somewhat faster and were appropriate in number to the questions asked, for example two for 'no' or eleven for 'November'. The intelligence, however, was crude, and a search of local church records failed to confirm any of the information received.

Who could have tricked us? The journalist and his friends had an obvious motive, but for part of the time during which knocks

were coming from bedroom A they were allegedly in Mr P.'s car; Mr P. has signed a statement to the effect that he did in fact drive them to Wisbech at the time concerned, and he, his wife and Mrs R.H. have all signed statements that they were not in any way responsible for the phenomena. We are convinced that the two children were too young to have been responsible, and in any case we went into their room several times between 1.25 and 3.34 and found them safely asleep.

However, let us assume that inside or outside the house there lurked some practical joker whose presence we failed to detect. We measured the whole house carefully inside and outside, but could find no evidence of concealed priest-holes, etc; we think the most likely hide-out and indeed almost the only possible one for a practical joker would have been the loft. On our first visit we could find no entrance to the loft; on our second visit we located a boarded-up trap door opening from bedroom A itself. This was covered in spiders' webs, and had obviously not been raised for a considerable time; but let us none-the-less assume that the practical joker hid in the loft.

Now the rappings were peculiarly sharp and percussive, and despite very extensive experiments on the acoustics of the house we were able to replicate them only from within bedroom A itself. Wherever the practical joker hid, he would still have needed to have set knocking devices under the floor of bedroom A. Accordingly we stripped bedroom A of all furniture and examined with the aid of a magnifying glass every inch of the tongued-and-grooved floorboards and their junction with the walls of the room. We could discover no toolmarks whatever, and we are convinced that the floorboards had never been taken up. We removed the board that ran through positions 1 and 3 and could find nothing suspicious either under it or under the neighbouring boards. We then in the same way examined the washroom ceiling, which was likewise made of boards, tongued-and-grooved together, and reached a similar conclusion. Our examination of the structure of the floor convinced us that knocking devices could have been laid under it only by removing boards from the floor of bedroom A or from the ceiling of the washroom; and that no boards had been removed from either of these places.

Finally, it seemed faintly possible that the knockings had in fact been made on the outside of the walls, windows or window-sills of bedroom A, and that we had misheard them. We found that in the still hours of the night, conversation in bedroom A was audible from outside the house, and, of course, the flashing of torches could be seen. We therefore conducted some experiments

to determine whether observers inside bedroom A were liable to confuse knockings made on its walls and windows from the outside of the house with knockings made inside the room itself. One of us sat in the same position as on the first night, but with his eyes covered; the other made rapping noises inside the room, whilst the Hon. A. P. W. Leith made them from outside the house on various places on the walls, windows, and window-sills of the room. A.D.C. and A.O.G. took it in turns to be subjects for the experiment, but neither made any major errors of localization. We conclude that the rappings were not made on the outside of the house; and this conclusion is reinforced by the fact that D.J.M. states in his report of the first night's phenomena that both he and Mrs P. were agreed that the raps which they heard came from the ceiling of the wash-room and not from the walls of the house. We therefore do not think that a practical joker could have been responsible for the phenomena.

During the last few years it has several times been suggested that hauntings and poltergeists are often caused by house movements due to subterranean forces. We are of the opinion that this theory cannot explain the phenomena which we have just described. The ostensible intelligence of the rappings is by itself sufficient to make it untenable. None-the-less, since it has been much discussed of late we will consider it at greater length.

Hannath Hall is situated in the Fens, and the large number of drains and water courses in that district makes the movements of underground water seem the most likely subterranean force to be at work. However, there are two other possibilities which we will discuss first, namely: earth-tremors and subsidence.

Seismic Disturbances

There are no geological faults in the area, and it is not an epicentre for earthquakes or tremors. We are assured by the Cambridge University Department of Geophysics and Seismology that no seismic disturbances of a magnitude sufficient to produce house movements or jolts occurred in the neighbourhood at the times of our first two investigations. There have in any case only been two earthquakes of any magnitude which have affected this area during the last two years.¹ We can, in consequence, discount the seismic explanation with reasonable certainty

¹ (a) Midlands earthquake, 11th February, 1957. (b) East Anglian earthquake, 9th February, 1958, reported to have had an epicentre somewhere between the Humber and the Wash, and near the Dogger Bank. Probably resulting from a fracture in the S.W.-N.E. Caledonian trend in the North Sea. The area of greatest disturbance was at Kings Lynn, Norfolk.

Subsidence of the house

That subsidence of the house has at some time taken place is shown by cracks in the exterior brickwork. Down the outside of the south wall there run a number of vertical cracks, which were filled with cement, probably ten to fifteen years ago, and have not opened further since then. In the north wall of the house there are two large cracks, the larger running from the eaves to within four feet of the ground. Both cracks extend right through the wall and can be traced in the plaster inside bedroom A and the washroom below. Down the west wall of the bedroom two vertical cracks run from just below the front window of bedroom A to the top of the washroom window immediately below it. The east wall of the bedroom has two long cracks, which were obviously filled with cement at the same time as those on the south side of the house.

It seems obvious that the most recent subsidence occurred at the northern end of the house, and could well have caused various bangs and creaks, which occupants of the house might have thought paranormal. However, the weathering of these cracks in the brickwork suggests that they are five to ten years old, and we are reasonably satisfied that the house is not at present subject to movement of the foundations. On June 15th, 1959, A.D.C. cemented glass tell-tale slides across both the cracks in the north wall of the house, and wedged glass phials into the widest parts of the longer vertical crack. He also cemented two glass tell-tales across the cracks in the plaster inside bedroom A. All the slides and phials are still intact, and we conclude that the cracks have not opened or closed during the period of observation (June 1959–January 1960). In this time there have been both a drought and fairly heavy rains, and one would expect some indication of subsidence if this is in fact liable to occur.

Underground water

Hannath Hall is in a district which abounds in water courses and phenomena occurring there would seem particularly susceptible to the underground water explanation. Furthermore there is a legend that a smugglers' tunnel runs to the house, whence is uncertain, although three points, all about a mile away, have been suggested. We have not been able to find any evidence to confirm the existence of a tunnel, but if one did exist it might serve as a channel up which water could move at pressure under suitable conditions—for instance after a heavy rainfall or a tide in a nearby river. Now since rainfall occurs twice a week in most districts, and tides twice a day in all tidal districts, underground

water could not be regarded as a plausible explanation of non-recurrent poltergeist phenomena, *unless* the phenomena in question occurred immediately following an *exceptionally heavy* rain, or an *exceptionally high* tide; we shall present evidence that at the time of the occurrences described above tides and rainfall in the vicinity of Hannath Hall were strictly normal.

We have consulted the Chief Engineers of the Nene River Board and of the North Level Commissioners, and we are indebted to them for detailed information concerning rainfall, tides and the rates of flow in water courses near Hannath Hall, as well as for Engineer's plans and graphs of the 'relation between the Water Level in the River Nene and observation wells'.

The months of October and November 1957 were not excessively wet; the average daily rainfall was .06 in., and prior to our first and second visits (November 16-17 and 21-22) no rain fell for 4 and 3 days respectively. There is no high ground (above 150 ft.) within 30 miles of Hannath Hall, and therefore no head of water can build up to augment the water table and cause subterranean disturbances. In any case the area is particularly well drained; there are one minor and two major water courses in the immediate vicinity.

To the north at a distance of $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles the South Holland Main Drain (SHMD) flows from west to east, emptying into the river Nene, which runs north to south two miles to the east of Hannath Hall. 200 yards to the south the North Level Main Drain (NLMD) flows eastwards, south of the village of Tydd Gote and into the Nene; just east of Tydd Gote are a dam and a pumping station which pumps water from the NLMD into the Nene. In between these two main drains the old Shire drain and angle cut flow south-eastwards emptying into the NLMD between Hannath Hall and the Tydd Gote pumping station. Hannath Hall is therefore bounded on the north, south and east sides by major watercourses, and in addition the old Shire Drain cuts through the area some 600 yards to the north-east.

The activities of the pumping station at Tydd Gote¹ which only works in the daytime, strongly suggest that subterranean water could not have caused the phenomena at Hannath Hall. The main function of the pumping station is to keep the level of water in the NLMD to 10 ft. O.D. Newlyn (6 in. on the pumping station gauge). The water levels and pumping figures of this station for the periods prior to and during our first two visits are quite normal. They substantiate the rainfall figures for the period, and show that

¹ On the night in question the pumps were started at approximately 7.30 a.m. next morning—*Ed.*

there could not have been an excessive accumulation of subterranean water in the area of Hannath Hall through seepage southward from the SHMD and the Old Shire Drain.

It has been suggested to us by Mr G. W. Lambert (to whom we are indebted for several interesting suggestions) that tidal pressure in the river Nene might cause a build-up of water in both the SHMD and the NLMD, and hence, derivatively, in the region of Hannath Hall; or, more generally, that a sympathetic change in the water table might occur in the area at the times of, or following, tides in the river Nene. We have examined this suggestion carefully, but can find no evidence to support it. Tides in the Nene on the occasions of our two first visits were of normal height. Tides in the Nene have little effect on the rate of flow of water through the sluice in the SHMD. The same applies to the NLMD sluice, which is situated on the Nene side of the Tydd Gote pumping station. Any effect of tidal pressure at the two sluices is in any case compensated for by the activities of the pumping station which maintains a constant water level in the NLMD.

The engineers of the Nene River Board have commented upon the suggestion that the water table in the district varies sympathetically with the tides; they believe that even in the alluvial soils of the district no such effect could be expected more than half a mile from the banks of the river Nene. Tests with bore holes between 60 and 200 feet from the river, conducted in 1937 and 1953, show a sympathetic ground tide following high and low tides in the Nene with a time lag of roughly one hour. (We have examined drawings of the sites of the borings.) The extent of tidal variations of water level in the borings falls off with distance from the river Nene according to the exponential law. The figures suggest that the maximum sympathetic tide which could be expected half a mile from the river would not be more than .003 in. It seems therefore most unreasonable to expect any similar phenomena in the immediate vicinity of Hannath Hall, which lies two miles to the west of the river and on the far side of the old sea bank defence, which runs north and south parallel to the river Nene.

We can therefore with all reasonable certainty conclude that this is one poltergeist case which cannot be explained by the geophysical theory.

Mr and Mrs P. inform us that after the night of our first visit the strange noises which occurred so often during the first few months of their tenancy almost entirely ceased. However there have been two further curious incidents. During the late after-

noon of 22nd April 1959, Mrs P. was sitting at the table in the living room. Something drew her attention to the door of the small boxroom, which she could see over her right shoulder. In the doorway she saw the figure of a small fair-haired boy, aged 6-8. She thought it odd, as it did not resemble her own son, who was in any case not in or near the house. She looked away momentarily, and when she looked back, she was surprised to find that the figure had completely disappeared; she looked in the boxroom, but it was empty.

One afternoon in early July of the same year, at about the same time, she saw the same figure in the same place. She was sitting in front of the fire in the living room, and on this occasion saw the figure more clearly. The light was behind it, and she noticed that only its head and shoulders appeared round the door. It was not her son, and seemed to be dressed in a white smock. It said nothing, and once again disappeared. There were no other witnesses to these phenomena, and Mrs P. mentioned them to us somewhat apologetically. They do not seem in any way connected with the happenings in bedroom A.

In April 1959 we brought a non-professional medium to the house, and held a seance in bedroom A. An alleged entity, who gave her name as Eliza Cullen or Culler, communicated, and stated that she had made the raps to attract attention. She said that she was looking for her baby, which was buried near a big tree in the garden. We have not been able to find any trace of an Eliza Cullen in the local records, and, (to the disappointment of Mr P.) we did not dig up the garden, which contains a fair number of trees.

<i>Dates of Visits to Hannath Hall</i>				<i>Investigators</i>
(1)	1957	Nov.	16-17th	A. D. Cornell, A. O. Gauld, J. M. Brotherton, D. J. Murray.
(2)		Nov.	21-22nd	A.D.C., A.O.G., D.J.M., I. Hacking, A. Hickling.
(3)	1958	Feb.	6-7th	A.D.C., A.O.G.
(4)		Aug.	30th	A.D.C., A.O.G., Mrs T. Turner
(5)		Oct.	17-18th	A.D.C., A.O.G., Dr I. Fletcher.
(6)		Nov.	15-16th	A.D.C., A.O.G., J.M.B., D.J.M.
(7)	1959	Apr.	24th	A.D.C., A.O.G., Hon. A. P. Leith.
(8)		Apr.	25-26th	A.D.C., A.O.G., Hon. A. P. Leith, Mr and Mrs R. Copley.
(9)		June	15th	A.D.C.
(10)		June	25th	A.D.C.
(11)		Sept.	24th	A.D.C., A.O.G.
(12)	1960	Jan.	26th	A.D.C., A.O.G.

*List of Written Sources for the Account of the
First Night's Phenomena*

Original notes written by A.D.C. between 2.45 and 3.34 a.m. on Nov. 17th 1957, and between 4.10 and 4.30 the same morning.

Original Notes written by A.O.G. between 11.45 p.m. on Nov. 16th and 12.32 a.m. on Nov. 17th, and between 2.45 and 3.34 a.m. and 4.10 and 4.30 a.m. on the same morning.

Statement written by J.M.B. between 2.30 and c. 2.50 a.m. on the morning of Nov. 17th, with appendices written between then and 4.14 a.m.

Statements written by A.O.G. and A.D.C. from their original notes, and dated 17th and 19th Nov. respectively.

A statement by D.J.M. based on notes (since lost) taken during and immediately after the occurrence of the phenomena, and dated 20th Nov.

*Comments on points arising from subsequent correspondence between
the authors and the editor*

The crux of the case is the evidence for any 'intelligence' exhibited by the raps. They were heard simultaneously by both A.O.G. and A.D.C. in bedroom A and by D.J.M. and Mrs P. in the washroom. All four witnesses agree that the knocks were *responses to questions*. The longer series came in a steady and quite rapid rhythm and when an answer was completed there was silence until after the next question had been posed. Inspection of the records show there were at least fifteen series of more than two raps. D.J.M.'s original statement (20 Nov. 1957) reads:

A.G.'s voice could be heard between raps or sets of raps, but the only words which could be heard were those in long series of raps when he was counting them aloud.

J.M.B.'s original statement (17 Nov. 1957) is:

We [J.M.B. and D.J.M.] were talking quietly to each other when I suddenly realized that knockings were coming from the bedroom at the end of the corridor in which Messrs Cornell and Gauld were . . . I mentioned this to Murray and we both distinctly heard sharp raps apparently in response to questions put by Mr Gauld, which could not be distinctly heard.

There is the inevitable question of the good faith of the investigators. I (editor) pointed out that A.D.C. always seemed to have been in a position to produce the phenomena himself, and the same was true, in a lesser degree, as regards A.O.G. for, at least, some of them. The authors have given me permission to quote some

rather personal remarks they wrote in this connection. A.O.G.'s original statement (17 Nov. 1957) is:

As for the possibility that either Tony [A.D.C.] alone or I alone faked the phenomena, this I think would have been possible but exceptionally difficult. As regards Tony I believe fraud to have been unlikely for the following reasons:

By about 2.40 a.m. the knocks were getting very faint. At my suggestion we took hands and touched feet. There was one more faint knock, this time from X1 [see sketch-plan Arca 1].

Position X1 seemed to me to be well out of his reach, and the manipulation of e.g. a flexible rod in that room, which was full of heaped up furniture, boxes and junk would have been extraordinarily difficult. The series of particularly loud knocks came from position X3 and I switched my torch on too quickly for him to have got back into position on the mattress without my noticing movement.

Both Tony and I had our torches in our hands or within easy access the whole time and were switching them on and off without warning. At the beginning I was suspicious that he was pulling my leg and flashed my torch several times. Tony was out of reach of the apparent location of the knockings and I saw no sign of arrested movement on his part.

A good deal of the time our legs were under the same blanket on the mattresses. I sensed no movements on Tony's part, nor could. I hear his clothes moving, but I could hear the sleeve of his duffle coat when he moved an arm.

Tony struck me as quite shaken by the phenomena (I was!) and was beginning to murmur things like 'I don't believe it!'

I have known Tony for five years and have conducted several investigations with him. Never before have I experienced anything like this. In general he strikes me as someone whose scepticism about such phenomena has increased greatly with increasing experience of them.

A.D.C. writes: I appreciate your remarks about A.D.C. being suspect. Originally I think both A.D.C. and A.O.G. suspected each other, although there would be little point in attempting to delude ourselves intentionally or otherwise. A.D.C.'s original report (19 Nov. 1957) says:

With regard to the possibility that either A.G. or myself produced these sounds—I could have caused them from position (1) but not those from position (2). Neither of us could have made the solitary tap which we heard after we had joined hands. Fraud on the part of A.G. or myself might have been possible but would have been extremely difficult. Throughout the phenomena we both made a point of checking each other's movements and drawing attention to any noises which we ourselves accidentally produced.

In view of the recent case of the Salford Poltergeist, reported in the *Daily Express* of 19 March, 1960, and for which the evidence seems to support the 'Naughty Little Girl' hypothesis, the authors confirm their reasons why, at Hannath Hall, they consider that hypothesis will not hold:

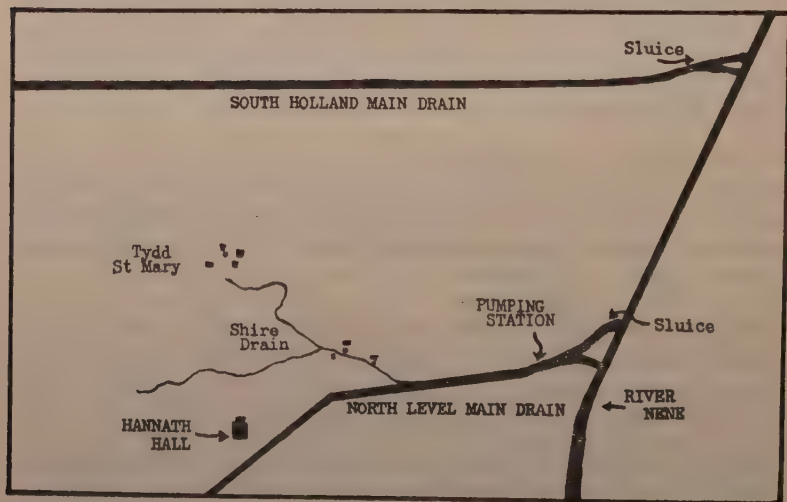
The children (three and five years) were too young to be physically and intellectually capable of co-ordinating the manoeuvres required to produce the phenomena. All parents consulted support unanimsly that belief.

The investigators looked into the children's room before they went into bedroom A and whenever they left and always found them asleep (very restlessly asleep as a matter of fact).

Apart from the window there were only two possible exits from the children's room. One was the door opening out on to the gallery. The other was a small opening (too small for an adult to pass through) cut by electricians into the loft. The opening was covered by hard-board which had been screwed down so firmly that the screws could not be turned.

So the investigators maintain that, so far as they can tell, no practical joker, child or adult, *could* have been responsible for the phenomena. They tested the house extensively for acoustic effects of the kind reported in the Salford case. The only acoustic oddity discovered (this was noted by Dr I. Fletcher) was that voices in the living room downstairs sounded from the gallery upstairs as though they were coming from the bathroom.

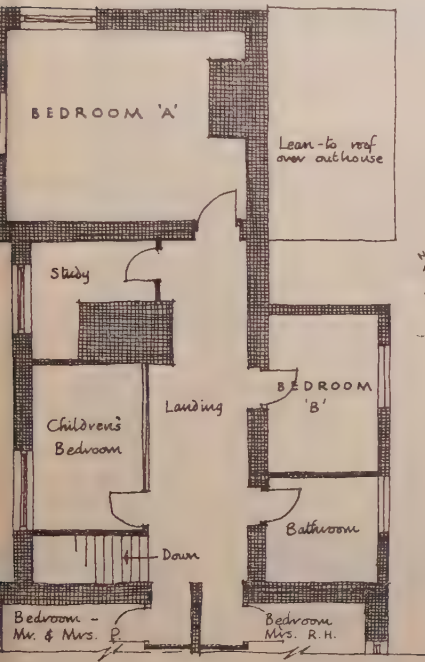
SKETCH-PLAN OF WATER-COURSES AROUND HANNATH HALL



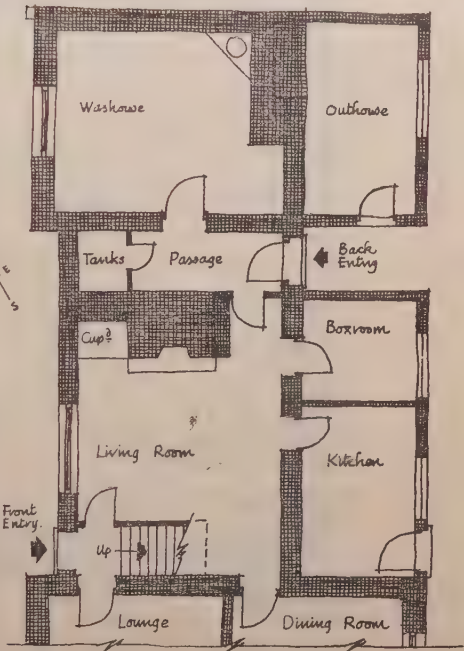
Scale 0 1/2 1 mile

HANNATH HALL, WISBECH, *Cambs.*
Garden Field A.R. & B.A.

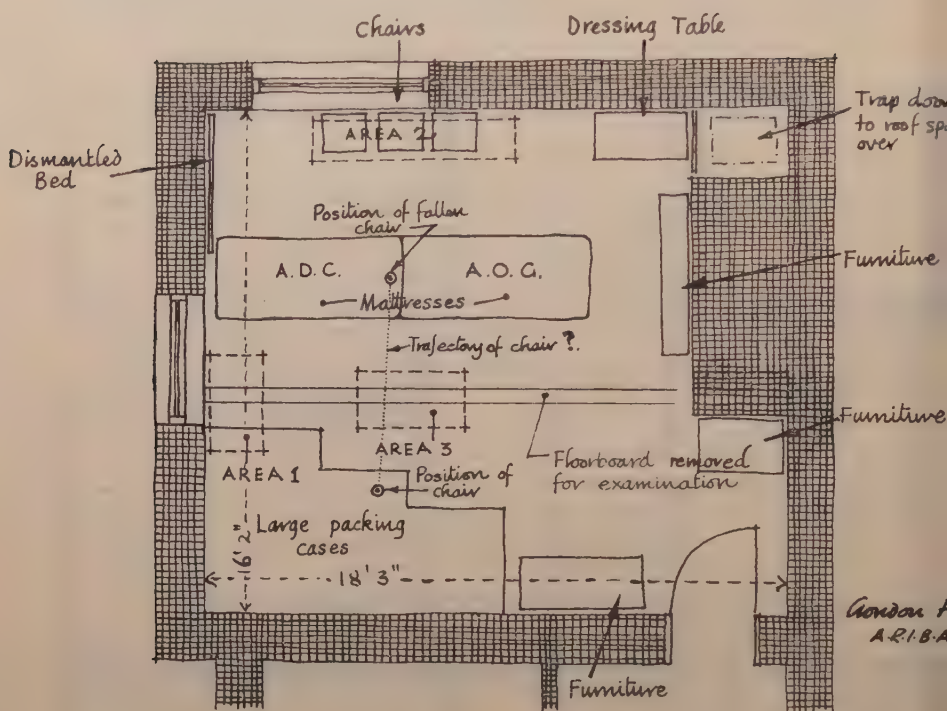
FIRST FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



BED ROOM. A.



A PRECOGNITIVE DREAM OF A BOMBED HOUSE

BY KATHLEEN GAY

IN 1937, after reading Dunne's book *An Experiment with Time* I decided to keep a note-book by my bed and, immediately on waking, write down any particularly vivid dream. I did this entirely for my own interest and with little belief I should obtain anything paranormal.

On 5 August, 1937, I dreamed I was in London and standing outside a house in which lived an old friend of my husband (whom we will call A.B.). A number of people had gathered together and were looking at the remains of a house which had apparently been pulled down leaving only the broken ground floor and the basement. I saw A.B. through a gap in a broken wall sitting in a cellar below ground level and could not help thinking how absurd he looked. I told him he reminded me of the prison at Tangier, which was visible through a grating in the base of the outer wall. Somebody standing behind me said something about 'May 10th' and I replied 'That is very significant and I will remember that date', and then woke up. I wrote it down at once while the dream was still vivid in my mind, but it seemed nonsensical to me and I never connected it with war. Having written it down I soon forgot it.

Nearly four years later, on 10 May, 1941, there was a particularly heavy air raid and the house in Ebury Street, S.W. 1, in which A.B. lived, received a direct hit from a bomb and was completely destroyed except for the outer wall of the ground floor and the basement. Fortunately A.B. was not there and did not at any time sit in the basement.

The dream raises various points of interest:

A.B. was not in the cellar; but it could be said that the dreamer placed him there in order to indicate to whom the house belonged and that he was safe.

Alternately a psychological interpretation might be found. A.B. was a very courageous and intelligent man but intensely reserved. He shunned personal contacts to an abnormal degree. He would lapse into a forbidding silence with a stranger and beat a rapid retreat if anyone dared probe into his thoughts too closely. He never married as was slow to make friends. I think his mental attitude to life was a severe handicap, so the fact that I saw him in a cellar and was reminded of a prison was not perhaps surprising.

You will notice that associations of my own have been inter-

woven with the subject matter of the dream but these do not explain the accuracy of the date and the facts of the disaster. In this case a foreknowledge of precise facts seems to have combined with a psychological situation which perhaps facilitated the emergence of the paranormal element.

(In a covering letter Mrs Gay reveals the fact that she reported the dream before it's fulfilment to two persons, her husband and A.B. himself—both now unfortunately dead. So she says 'the truth of the story depends now entirely on my word and a very messy notebook'. The account is quoted by G. N. M. Tyrrell in his book *The Personality of Man*, Pelican Edition, pp. 88-9.—Ed.)

REPORT ON A SITTING WITH A MEDIUM

BY ROSALIND HEYWOOD

THE following case was mentioned to me by Lady Faith Culme-Seymour and I asked her for a written account. She was able to write this from detailed notes made on May 30th, 1949, which I have seen. She had sent a report to the S.P.R. at the time, which included a first-hand account by her mother-in-law, Lady Culme-Seymour of her sitting with the medium, Mrs Bedford, and corroborated Lady Faith's account of the events in which they both took part. Lady Culme-Seymour is now dead, and unfortunately, in the correspondence which ensued, this report got lost, but I have seen a letter from the S.P.R. referring to it, which is additional evidence that the events were recorded at the time. They are also confirmed by the present Sir Michael Culme-Seymour, who was a great friend of the late Oliver Gatty and, through taking part in his study of mediumship, had become well aware of the problems of evidence involved. Lady Faith's report is as follows:

Rockingham Castle

One night at the beginning of May, 1949, my husband brought up two jewel boxes from the safe where they are kept, to show me the family jewels. We had been married just a year and I had never seen them. One box contained the Watson jewels (from whom he is also descended), in the other were the Culme-Seymour jewels, from his father's side of the family.

In the latter box I found a large pearl ring. Neither of us knew whose ring it was, though it came from the Culme-Seymour box.

The pearl had gone dead, so I said I would hang it round my neck for a week or two to see if it would revive. We said nothing to anybody about this, not thinking it important.

Three days later I woke my husband in the night, by saying, 'Well, goodbye, Lady Seymour, I am so pleased to have met you.' On waking I had an impression of having gone a long way in a dream. Neither of us mentioned this dream to anyone, nor did we connect it in any way with the ring. We thought it rather a joke. Lady Seymour had died in 1912.

On May 6th, a few days after this dream, my mother-in-law, who lives in the house too, but quite separately from us, went to London for the night. When she returned she told us that she had had a sitting with Mrs Bedford at the London Spiritualist Alliance. She often had sittings with one medium or another, for she was a confirmed spiritualist. She was annoyed and disappointed about the sitting, which, she said, had been entirely wasted in an argument she had had with her husband, Mike (Admiral Sir Michael Culme-Seymour). He had died in 1925. She was convinced of his survival and always talked to him via mediums.

In this sitting with Mrs Bedford he told her that he was so glad Faith had talked with his mother the other night, and that the link between them was, of course, her ring which Faith was wearing. She (my mother-in-law) hadn't understood this at all. She thought her husband was quite wrong. She knew I had a family ring, a diamond ring that my husband gave me as a wedding present, but this ring was known to have belonged to someone quite different in the family. Her husband was, however, quite determined that I was wearing his mother's ring. Apparently the argument went on and on. Hence my mother-in-law's disappointment!

When she told us this (my husband was present at the time) I at once pulled out the pearl ring and showed it to her, asking, 'Whose ring is this? Is this the one you talked about?' She said, 'It must have been that one, as I know it belonged to Mike's mother. I remember she always wore it.'

I ought perhaps to explain that my husband's grandmother, the Lady Culme-Seymour of my dream, was always referred to as Lady Seymour by all of us, as distinct from my mother-in-law, whom everyone called Lady Culme-Seymour, or Florrie, or Fof.

I have given the facts of this episode, but without commenting on them or trying to explain them.

(signed) FAITH CULME-SEYMOUR

3.1.1960

It was also confirmed by her husband Sir Michael Culme-Seymour, as follows:

I have read this and agree that it is correct and I confirm the details.

(signed) MICHAEL CULME-SEYMOUR

3.1.1960

I asked Lady Faith if the ring could possibly have swung out from her dress and been seen by her mother-in-law during the few days that she wore it before the sitting. She replied that this was out of the question as at the time she always wore high, roll-top sweaters and the ring, which was very ugly, was on a long piece of tape. In any case this would not account for the medium's mention of Lady Faith's dream, about which she and her husband had said nothing. It looks as if the medium indulged in ESP at one remove.

RE-THINKING TO SOME PURPOSE IN EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH

BY S. A. GOOCH

THE field of ESP research is not one which is distinguished either by the number or variety of ideas produced as to how to go about that research. There has, in fact, since Professor Rhine began his experiments been no decisive new development. The lack of new ideas is to be regretted for its own sake, but equally because it may lead to the over-valuation and over-protection from criticism of present techniques. The danger exists that we may come to regard the present position as the best of all possible positions, and it becomes increasingly difficult as time passes to approach the problems concerned with fresh eyes. The purpose of this paper therefore is to indicate some of the limitations of current quantitative research, in particular of classical card-guessing experiments, and to suggest not only modifications of but alternatives to that work.

In designing his experiments Professor Rhine chose to ignore what we already know, or better may infer, about the nature of ESP and the conditions under which it is habitually produced. That these experiments under his conditions were successful was in many ways a misfortune, since the attention of researchers was only too completely drawn from the conditions under which spon-

taneous and mediumistic phenomena occur, and their possibly vital role in the production of indisputable as opposed to borderline ESP effects. We are not, of course, justified in assuming a causal or any other connection between an event and an attendant circumstance, even where they are found regularly together. Still less, however, are we justified in ignoring the possibility of such a connection. We may not assume that darkened rooms and linked hands, for instance, are dispensable in the production of phenomena without evidence from controlled experiments to that effect. Such an assumption is at the very least unscientific.

Spontaneous phenomena, to turn first to these, tend to be unpredictable, infrequent and brief in occurrence, taking place as seldom as once in a life-time. When they do occur it is often at moments of great stress or danger to the individual(s) concerned. Where two or more people are involved it is not uncommon to find that they stand in some close biological and/or emotional relationship to each other. Strong emotion is in any case a fairly regular feature of these experiences. This is not an exhaustive list but already a picture emerges of the conditions under which, on the face of it, the incidence of ESP is highest. Professor Rhine nevertheless chooses to hunt night-owls by day, so that we find little allowance in his experiments for the possibility that ESP may operate (strongly) only at very infrequent intervals, or for any other of the usual features of spontaneous phenomena. It is true that his subjects are tested over long runs on different occasions. But it is as if one were hoping to detect the presence of electrical current in a circuit which was switched on only at very brief, random and infrequent intervals by a process of occasional testing. One might continue to test indefinitely without result. Experimenters have noted that some subjects after a very good period fade completely. This would seem to support the view that the faculty is possessed by individuals only at a certain time or times in their lives. Possibly the occurrence is cyclic. We need to examine instances of such phenomena with a view to discovering similar constellations of events and circumstances and/or individual make-up. Possibly again there is some process of recharging. This is certainly the view of most mediums, if the suggestion that the medium can teach us something about the powers he exercises so effectively is not too outrageous. The question of biological and emotional relationships, to proceed, is one that could be tested easily enough with existing techniques by comparing the results obtained between husband/wife, brother/sister, pupil/teacher, etc., with those obtained between strangers or mutually antipathetic subjects. However, a blank here would

show only that such relationships were ineffective in isolation. It might be that they are important only in conjunction with other factors, for instance at a time of danger to one or other person, our next point. The moment of crisis and the element of danger are likewise ignored in our experimental situations. Present techniques could no doubt be modified to include this aspect. On the other hand the spontaneous phenomenon is essentially a flash response at a particular brief moment. This is in direct contrast to the nature of card-guessing experiments which involve relatively long, frequently-repeated runs of responses. What is needed is an experiment which takes account of the characteristics of these phenomena by a strong impact and a brief demand. The shift would be from one person repeating the same experiment a large number of times to one short experiment repeated by a large number of people, which would presumably provide statistical validity.

When we turn to a consideration of the phenomena of mediumship we find at once close parallels and marked divergences with the picture which emerged from our first considerations. It seems in fact that we are dealing with two different products, or rather with two different forms of the same product, which differ in their properties somewhat as do for instance the oxides of carbon in the physical world. The writer suggests that these differences are sufficient to constitute two separate fields of research each requiring its own research techniques and posing its own problems of experimental design.

The main point of contact between the two fields is the emotional involvement in what is taking place. For the majority of mediums, central to the exercise of their powers is an active belief in God and an after-life, together with the idea that they have been specially singled out and gifted for the work of acting as intermediaries between this world and the next and as comforters of the bereaved and the hopeless. Under these conditions the pre-occupation of the personality is virtually total. If the role of the emotional side of the personality is a central one, and there is widespread support for this view, then we cannot be surprised that the achievements of current research are such very pale reflections of those of the seance and the clairvoyant address. The point of difference between the two suggested fields is that mediumship is achieved through training. That a long and arduous period of training is necessary before even the so-called natural medium achieves any degree of proficiency is a basic belief of spiritualists (and occultists generally). The failure by researchers to recognize the importance and the potential of a train-

ing programme must be regarded as a serious oversight. Any such programme which either increased the strength of responses or brought them more under the volitional control of the subject would be a material step towards the goal of the convincing and consistently repeatable experiment. Here we may crystallize a little the suggestion that we are dealing with two separate fields each requiring its own particular research techniques. The repeatable experiment in the one case may be achieved by the more or less blind reproduction of the conditions attendant on spontaneous phenomena, and here the experiment is repeatable at the will of the experimenter. In the other case repeatability is achieved by the subject acquiring volitional control over the faculty, and the experiment is repeatable at the will of the subject. It is in this latter case that card-guessing techniques may come to occupy a permanent place, but the objection still remains that they lack emotional incentives.

Some unreported attempts have already been made to train subjects for 'mediumship' under controlled conditions. A small group met regularly once a week for several months under the chairmanship of a professional medium. With no preliminaries the various members of the group, seated in a rough circle in an otherwise bare room, attempted to obtain information about other members of the group simply by taking thought, and at the end of twenty minutes each reported what he or she had 'seen' or 'thought' or 'felt'. There followed then a period of discussion and instruction from the medium. Results after a time were extremely good, sufficiently so to warrant immediate duplication of this work, this time under more carefully controlled conditions. In the writer's opinion insufficient care was taken to preclude the acquisition of information by normal means. Not only was no record kept of material communicated, but worse still from an evidential standpoint, friendships developed between individuals. On the other hand certain conditions were imposed on the medium's terms of reference which were neither necessary nor desirable, no doubt in deference to the strange but widespread idea that certain things, such as music or prayer, are of themselves somehow 'unscientific' and that their presence or absence determines whether an experiment is scientific or otherwise: whereas they are merely the particular variables of this particular area of research.

It has been too readily assumed by research workers generally that they have nothing to learn from spiritualists. By and large, but always with exceptions, there has been a failure to recognize the possibly vital importance of a sympathetic and highly emo-

tional atmosphere. What is needed are effective controls which however do not interfere in any way with the methods used to obtain phenomena. In his present state of unknowledge the psychic research worker has no business to assume that any circumstance or piece of ritual is dispensable. This does not at all mean that we have to join the spiritualist in his belief that a bowl of water or a vase of flowers emits helpful 'vibrations'. We can suspect that the real effect of these and other touches is to produce a state of emotional excitement, and that it is this which in turn facilitates the occurrence of ESP. But when we remove or play down such elements, believing that they are not in themselves responsible for the effects, we unfortunately throw the baby out with the bath-water by rendering our subjects emotionally quiescent. It was therefore in the writer's view a mistake to limit in any way the medium's terms of reference in the work described above. The one valid reason for interference in this respect is in order to rule out the possibility of fraud.

The writer would make the following suggestions for an experimental attempt to train subjects as 'mediums', which incorporate the experience gained from the first attempt: that the participants should be people of good education accustomed to expressing themselves clearly and briefly, and predisposed to a belief in paranormal phenomena: that they should be complete strangers to each other, able to see the need and ready to take on the responsibility of exchanging no communication of any sort with each other outside the appointed room while the experiment lasts: that the leader of the group be a professional medium, free to use any methods he or she thinks fit to obtain results: that a tape-recording be kept of every word spoken at each session, and that after the period of concentration each should write down his statement before hearing any of the others: that an independent but sympathetic observer be present at each session, who could be changed each week if desirable.

This set-up would seem to rule out the possibility of acquisition of information by normal means. The recording would establish how far correct statements were merely being built up from earlier scraps of information. The observer would be present as a general safeguard and to forestall any objection that notes could be passed or information conveyed by gesture. The experiment would of course be limited to mental mediumship. The question of the objective evaluation remains. Possibly people unconnected with the experiment could be asked to rate correct statements on a four-point scale as being in their opinion likely, unlikely, very unlikely, etc., to be the result of pure guess-work. This might at

least provide a method of assessing progress. We must incidentally not forget that two correct statements together form a geometrical not an arithmetical progression. It is possible that the tape-recorder (and the observer) would prove inhibitory to a considerable extent. It would be wise therefore to choose subjects who had had considerable experience with these. The vital point is that the medium should have a free hand in respect of method and atmosphere. Hitherto the approach of many workers has resembled that of a man studying the habits of a fish, who takes the fish out of the water to get a better look at it. Psychological phenomena, removed from their 'natural' element have in the laboratory, like the fish, jerked fitfully for a while and then expired altogether. This paper is a plea to keep the fish in the water.

REVIEWS

JOURNAL OF PARAPSYCHOLOGY, XXIII, 4, December 1959, Durham N.C.

Dr J. G. van Bussbach reports further experiments^{*} on ESP between pupils and teachers. He found earlier that children in the 5th and 6th grades gave significant results whereas older children scored at chance level. Similar experiments have now been tried with still younger children. The overall results were strongly significant. Confirmation of the hypothesis of better scoring by younger children is claimed from the observation that the pupils of the first grade did better than those of the second grade.

The Presidential address of Dr Gertrude Schmeidler to the 1959 annual convention of the Parapsychological Association suggests the value of series of related experiments rather than repetitions of one unchanged experiment. She makes a number of good suggestions as to possible directions of variations within the same series.

An exploratory investigation is reported from New Zealand by C. J. Adcock and D. Quartermain. ESP tests were given under three conditions to a number of groups of students. No overall significant results were obtained although the authors find some evidence of departure from randomness in the scoring. This was not, however, found to be related to the sheep-goat classification.

Professor Chauvin of the French National Bee Laboratory has carried out an investigation (also exploratory) of the effect on ESP results of differing position of the subject in relation to the

target cards. In an ingenious experiment of novel design he finds some evidence of such an effect. Further research will be necessary to confirm the reality of this result and (if the result is confirmed) to discover whether it is due to the positions themselves or to the opinions about them of the subjects or of the experimenter.

The correspondence includes an illuminating letter by Professor Zorab on the alleged disease-producing earth-rays which appear to be the basis of a considerable commercial racket in Holland.

There are reviews of Rosalind Heywood's *The Sixth Sense*, of *Water Witching U.S.A.* (Vogt and Hyman), and of Zorab's *Parapsychologie*.

Abstracts of the papers presented at the 1959 Annual Convention of the Parapsychological Association are also printed.

THE JOURNAL OF PARAPSYCHOLOGY, XXIV, 1, March 1960, Durham N.C.

A symposium was held at the Duke Parapsychological Laboratory on the Incorporeal Personal Agency (I.P.A.) hypothesis. This is a more adequate name for what has been generally known as the 'survival hypothesis'.

The opening address by the Chairman (Dr J. B. Rhine) reveals the fact that the earliest aim of the Duke Parapsychological Laboratory was to shed light on the IPA question and that its concentration on ESP was the result of the realization that this was a matter that had to be settled first. He considers that the results of its findings on ESP are that the evidence obtained from seances in favour of IPA has become less cogent. At the same time, our knowledge of ESP and PK has made the IPA explanation a less unlikely one than it appeared before.

Mrs Rhine's paper on 'The Evaluation of non-recurrent Psi Experiences bearing on Post-mortem Survival' points out that most ostensibly post-mortem communications provide little evidence for IPA since they can be explained by the motivation of the percipient setting into action his own extra-sensory processes. On the other hand, she describes a type of ostensible communication which, if well attested, would provide strong evidence for IPA. This type is that in which the motive for communication is much stronger in the agent than in the percipient and where the means of communication is one which the percipient could not have used. She finds one excellent example of a narrative of this type in her records, but unfortunately this does not satisfy the other condition (of being well attested). The defining of the

class, however, may be of value in the study of the problem of IPA by leading to renewed search for cases that satisfy both conditions.

In an article 'Can precognition occur diametrically?', Professor C. B. Nash reports an experiment in which subjects were required both to predict targets which were determined more than a year later, and also to check those calls which they felt sure were right. They did not succeed in their aim of guessing the targets but showed a below chance tendency in their checking of hits.

An account of the work of the S.P.R. since 1932 is contributed by Mr Salter and Mrs Goldney.

There is a very full review by Dr Pratt of *The Mind Readers*, by Soal and Bowden.

R. H. THOULESS

THE MODERN CHURCHMAN. December 1959.

The interest of this issue to students of psychical research is that it reprints the papers given at a recent conference of the Modern Churchman's Union of which the theme was death, immortality and Christianity. The issue contains ten papers and a sermon, all of considerable intellectual quality and which arouse curiosity about the discussions evoked, but no hint is given. There is evidently some interesting disagreement among the writers themselves.

Dr E. G. Parrinder in a short paper on immortality in the religions of Hinduism and Buddhism criticizes the Hindu monist teaching that all things are one and identical. He points out the contradiction between the Buddhist idea of 'no-soul' and their belief in reincarnation. Nirvana, he stresses, is not 'nothingness' but is defined as 'the stopping of becoming in Nirvana', and points out that it is as difficult for ordinary Buddhists and Hindus, as for the majority of Westerners, to extract meaning from these words. To the Buddhist one life on earth must seem a very short trial run to get rid of all egoism and earn an eternity of bliss. The writer concludes that the final goal of the Christian mystic is close to that of the Hindu.

The Chairman of the Research Group of the Churches' Fellowship for Psychical Study, the Rev J. D. Pearce-Higgins, considers that a fateful break in the Christian views on eschatology occurred at the Reformation. The belief in angels began to decay and the reformers adopted the doctrine of the long sleep followed by a general resurrection of the dead. But the Roman Catholic church with its belief in the ministry of angels and saints and the doctrine of purgatory kept alive the notion of the life after death in a way

that did not happen in Protestant countries. This lack of teaching may be responsible for the spread of spiritualism, theosophy and similar movements in more recent years. An account is given of a curious incident when the Church of England Committee on Spiritualism reported in 1938. What reason there can have been for suppressing this report is not stated, but it appears that the Committee by 9 votes to 3 concluded that there was good evidence from psychical research of survival after death. He considered the interesting figures on the state of public opinion on the question of survival which show that less than half the population believe in a future life and a surprising number of people believe in reincarnation.

The Rev C. O. Rhodes, unlike other writers in this symposium does not think that people miss the beliefs on eschatology. They are not conscious that the lack of belief in a life after death leaves any gap. On the contrary to many people the thought of everlasting life would be a horror. In his view the worst possible apologetic for Christianity is to say that, without immortality, life loses its meaning. Music is music and beauty is still beauty whatever our future. It is important to note that the lengthening of the life span and the progress of medical science and technology have done much to weaken the power of death and to change the general attitude to it.

ROBERT S. W. POLLARD

THE ETERNAL QUEST. By John West. Psychic Press, London, 1960. 254 pp. 21s.

This book is written by a member of the S.P.R., and, as its title indicates, is in the tradition of Dr Raynor Johnson's *The Imprisoned Splendour*. In it the author has had the courage to ask, not only, 'Does ESP occur?', but 'What conception of man's nature does it demand?', and he has read widely in the physical and biological sciences and elsewhere in search of an answer. Not all his fellow members will agree with the answer he reaches, that man in his true state is an immortal spirit which from time to time reincarnates in a physical body, but many will have enough of the field naturalist in them to find of much interest the two personal psi experiences he quotes in support of his views. It is a pity that he feels his other experiences are too personal for publication, for the psi experiences of honest and articulate people can at least throw light on the problems to be faced when planning experiments.

His first account is of the apparition of a much loved pet dog, which had had to be put down, and which, he says, was seen on

separate occasions at close quarters by himself, his wife, a nurse and their housekeeper, and again, judging by their behaviour, by another pet dog and a cat. His second account is of a series of three detailed, vivid and coherent dreams, two of them on consecutive nights in 1927 and the third in 1950. Of all these notes were made at the time. In the first two dreams Mr West appeared to share in the experiences of a young man on his way to and during a war in the Far East. From the uniforms, type of ship, landscape, coloured people and other details, he identified this, after discussion with an expert, with the Burma War of 1825. His 1950 dream was of the same young man paying a farewell visit to a girl in a country house in England, where, inside, he noted the furniture and curious asymmetrical partitioning of certain rooms and, outside, the grouping of trees past which he rode. Four years later in 1954 he happened to see an illustration in a newly published periodical of the house he had seen in his dream, and also a statement that in 1825 certain rooms had been oddly partitioned as he had seen them. But the surrounding trees were different. It was not until 1958 that he found an 1820 view of the house, giving the trees as he had noted them in the dream. Subsequent enquiry also revealed that the then owners of the house had a daughter who was engaged to a young man who had bought a commission and gone to the Burma War until her parents considered her old enough to marry him.

In the spring number of the American S.P.R. Journal Professor Ian Stevenson discusses a number of other cases in which individuals appear to recollect former lives. It seems hard to deny that on occasion people of integrity do have the experience of identifying themselves with actors in past events of whom they have not heard by normal means. One day perhaps the origin of such experiences will be settled.

ROSALIND HEYWOOD

PHÉNOMÈNES DE MÉDIUMNITÉ. By Robert Tocquet. Paris, B. Grasset, 1959. 140 pp. 450 frs. (Collection 'Bilan du Mystère', 9.)

Among modern French writers on psychical research Robert Tocquet is becoming better known every year, not only on account of his own work in this field but also from the fact that his knowledge of other matters makes him able to assess the evidence far better than those whose acquaintance with general scientific work is much more limited.

In this book the author has taken on himself the formidable task of surveying the field of the physical phenomena. Beginning

with the evidence for the movement of objects without contact, he proceeds to discuss the levitation of human beings, results from dice throwings, ectoplasm and the question of fraud in mediumship.

In the discussion of the telekinetic phenomena he lays particular stress on the evidence obtained from the records of Home and Palladino; while in dealing with levitations he emphasizes those said to have occurred with D. D. Home, although unfortunately he includes the story of the medium floating from one window into another, a tale in which certain discrepancies suggest that it were better forgotten.

As he warms to his subject Mr Tocquet reveals that he is not quite so critical as might have been expected from reading the earlier part of his book. His weak spot is shown in his treatment of such mediums as Guzik, Kluski and Ruggieri where he clearly believes in the accuracy and reliability of the records. Moreover, like so many other writers, he seems to think that because persons in other walks of life but wholly untrained in psychical research think certain mediums to be genuine, then their testimony is of value. This mistaken idea is clearly seen in his printing a photograph of the famous 'Manifesto of the Thirty-four', testifying to the genuineness of the phenomena produced by the late Jan Guzik, a medium for whose reliability I have never discovered any real evidence in spite of the fact that both Professor Richet and Sir Oliver Lodge believed in him.

By choosing Home, Palladino and Tomczyk for detailed discussion Mr Tocquet shows that, in spite of his somewhat naive belief in the statements of parapsychologists, he is fully awake to the acute difficulty of the problems that these three mediums raise. As a result of his analysis he is inclined to think that some, at least, of the phenomena produced by them were clearly inexplicable in normal terms, and it is certainly hard to produce any good reasons to suppose that he is mistaken in his belief.

This excellent little book should be read by all those interested in these difficult questions, although the general reader will miss many important points which are only recognizable by the expert. It is well produced, but is somewhat marred by the fact that the author, for some reason best known to himself, has refrained from giving references to very many of his quotations from various authorities and, since the book has no index, the task of the student is made therefore unnecessarily hard.

E. J. DINGWALL

TREATISE ON PARAPSYCHOLOGY. Essay on the Scientific Interpretation of the Human Phenomena known as the Supernatural. By René Sudre. George Allen & Unwin, 1960. 401 pp. 35s.

Many members who do not read French easily will be pleased to know that Sudre's 'Traité de Parapsychologie', first reviewed in the *Journal* by W. H. Salter in June, 1957, is now available in an excellent English translation by C. E. Green.

Although it provides a comprehensive survey of the subject it will be of most value to those who have some previous knowledge of the literature. M Sudre's assessments of the value of the evidence in particular cases is sometimes open to question, and he is not always accurate in minor matters of fact. For example, the 'two young girls' mentioned on page 322 were in fact a middle-aged schoolmistress and her ex-pupil.

However, this is hardly surprising in a survey of this magnitude, covering as it does all types of phenomena from water-divining to hypnotism, and from telepathy to psychokinesis. We must be grateful to M Sudre for his stimulating attempt to place these diverse phenomena within the framework of a unified theory in a way which is not often attempted by British psychical researchers. Many of the points he brings out are worthy of further study, and in particular he pays considerable attention to physical phenomena. Although by the standards of this Society his approach is insufficiently critical it is to be hoped that he may help to reawaken the interest of investigators in these most elusive phenomena.

The book is well produced. A comparison of the English version with the original shows an exceptionally high standard in the translation of so complex and technical a text.

G. A. Joy

CORRESPONDENCE

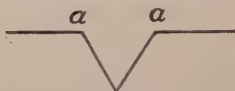
Water Witching

SIR,—I read with great interest Mr Denys Parsons' review of *Water Witching* in the March, 1960, issue of the *Journal* and was struck by his remark that 'curiously no investigation of this kind [of unconscious muscular action] seems to have been devoted specifically to the *modus operandi* of the divining rod.' (p. 264).

I would like to point out that such investigations have indeed been conducted. As far back as 1665 A. Kircher in his *Mundus Subterraneus* showed it was the man that turned the twig and not

some magical faculty inherent in the rod by placing the twig, supported by two stakes, above a spot where, a moment before, the rod had vigorously turned.

In Holland too, just after the last war, we conducted some experiments to elucidate this matter. The Dutch people were then very much in the grips of an 'earth ray' scare which was believed to be the cause of cancer and other serious illnesses. These rays were thought to be some kind of electricity and therefore the dowzers were now using metal rods instead of wooden ones. They were often about one-third of an inch thick and had the form:



As a test we manufactured a rod with ball-bearings at the points *a-a* in the above sketch. Whatever power was exerted upon the two grips of the rod it could not bring about a turning of the V-shaped part of the rod. After the dowser had found a spot where the ordinary rod turned like mad he was asked to go over the same course again but with the rod in his hands provided with ball-bearings. Very much to the surprise of the dowzers assisting in the experiment the rod remained immobile.

Imitating their German colleagues, the Dutch dowzers asserted that the pathological earth rays could be neutralized by means of a certain apparatus with which they could supply their clients. By a switch the apparatus could be put out of action so that it no longer screened off the rays. But with the apparatus working the rod would remain inactive in the hands of the dowser as there were then no rays to be detected. As soon as the apparatus was turned off up would jump the rod.

Several experiments were conducted to test this matter. The dowser was told that the apparatus was on or off, but, in reality it was just the other way round. Invariably the rod reacted in accordance with what the dowser believed to be the situation at a given moment.

GEORGE ZORAB

ESP Card Experiments

SIR,—I was interested to read Mr Maddeley's letter in the *June Journal*, in which he compares the evidence of the Palm Sunday Case with the results obtained by the card guessing technique.

To anyone, who, like myself, has personally experienced, both as a percipient and as an observer, many phenomena of a dramatic character, these card games seem singularly futile. Although the

results of these can be statistically assessed, the experiments are not repeatable, as Dr Rhine and others have since discovered. Furthermore, as has been pointed out elsewhere, the tests are so conceived, or misconceived, that it is indeed doubtful whether they permit the ESP faculty to operate satisfactorily, as the percipients know in advance the symbols they are likely to perceive.

LUCIAN LANDAU

Inter-personal Communication

SIR,—I was interested in the account in the March 1960 *Journal* of a case reported by Dr Wickes, in which a mother consciously broke a link with her son which had kept him psychologically bound to her and this had registered in him at the same time 3000 miles away. In an example from my own experience it appeared that a bond which was holding a 'dead' husband back had to be renounced by his widow before he could feel free from a possessiveness which had hampered him in life. In this case too, as with the son above, the fact that the widow let go her grip seemed to register in the husband. I was merely the intermediary through whom this fact could be conveyed to him.

The incident was as follows: The widow of a psychiatrist who had recently died came to see me. I had known both her and her husband well and some years previously had done some analytic work with them, in connection with a difficulty in their own married life. She told me that she was very upset because his death had cut short the working out of this difficulty, and had left her with a sense of incompleteness and strain because now the understanding that had been on the point of achievement could never be attained.

While she was speaking I suddenly became aware of her husband's presence—and told her so. She knew me well enough to accept this as true and a very strange interaction occurred. The husband conveyed to me that he too wanted to clear up something between them, as, over and above its nature and her distress about it, it was holding him back. I could sense his thoughts and the point of view he wished to put to her and I knew when her replies and my contribution as analyst got through to him. Apparently the 'discussion' between them, as I learnt from the wife later, did go on from the point interrupted by death. Not having seen them for some years I was unaware of this.

The net result of this curious analytical session was that something was cleared out of the way, and, at the end of it, the widow seemed to see him picking up his own load and setting off up his own hill happily, no longer pulled back by her and the unresolved

difficulty between them. Though she had not been directly aware of his presence as I had, she had been aware of responding to him through *me*, and not just responding to me. I too felt, as the tension was dispersed, that a real bit of constructive analytical psychotherapy had been accomplished, as effectively as if both wife and husband, instead of the wife alone, had been sitting in front of me.

My mind had acted as analyst in normal consciousness, as well as interpreting for the 'dead' psychiatrist. My intuitive awareness of his thoughts was purely interior-extrasensory and my dialogue with him appeared to be telepathic. Apparently he could not make direct contact with his wife, as her mind could not 'stretch' to include such psychic awareness. He needed an intermediary who was at home on the psychoanalytical level, telepathically open to other minds, and also knew both himself and his wife intimately. I was the only one to fill that particular bill. His presence then made itself felt when the wife was with me, without my doing anything about it. I only picked up my 'cue' and my 'job' when its nature registered itself in me and his wife responded to the unusual and unexpected situation.

I am of course aware that this incident cannot be checked and that only I know that I have not invented my share in the experience, but I am prompted to send it to you by Dr Thouless's address to the Parapsychological Association, which appeared in your March issue, and also by Dr Soal's remark that the study of spontaneous experiences might give us the clue to understanding, if only we knew how to look at them.

A. GRAHAM IKIN

Hansel v. Soal

SIR,—May I draw attention to statements in Mr Scott's recent article in the June, 1960, *Journal* which appear to be somewhat misleading? In Mr Hansel's attempt to duplicate Shackleton's performance by means of the 'substitution' method (p. 305) even if we ignore the first low score of 7/48 (7 hits in 48 trials) he has only succeeded in making an average of 4.25 substitutions per sheet of 48 trials for the remaining four sheets. Even could he maintain this average rate over the 140.81 sheets of Shackleton's (+ 1) trials, he would have scored only 1830 hits as compared with the 1958 actually made by Shackleton. This corresponds to a deficiency of four standard deviations so that the odds against the deficiency being due to chance is of the order of $2 \times 15,000 = 30,000$ to 1. The last of Mr Hansel's scores (16/48) might easily in part be a chance fluke.

On the same page (p. 305) Mr Scott goes on to say 'It occurred to us after the demonstration that in the first sitting with J. Al. as agent—the most successful agent in the Shackleton experiments—Shackleton had scored -1 successes but not $+1$. On all subsequent occasions he scored $+$. The parallel is perhaps suggestive.' The last statement is not strictly true, for on the *second* sitting with J. Al. as agent (15 May, 1942) the critical ratio of $+1$ hits was only 1.18 and *lower* than on the first occasion (1.77). But on the four following occasions at normal rate Shackleton scored significantly on *both* $+1$ and -1 during the same sitting. In fact the total scores for $+1$ and -1 are respectively $316/1104$ and $330/1104$ in the six sittings at normal rates, and the difference is of no significance.

It would have been very interesting to have seen what scores Mr Hansel would have achieved at the 'rapid' rate of calling with far less time to think about what he was doing! Why was this attempt abandoned? At the first attempt with J. Al. done at 'rapid' rate Shackleton achieved a critical ration of 3.44 on $+2$ displacement and of 2.57 on -2 displacement, in a total of 161 trials. I would very much like to see Mr Hansel emulate this performance by means of the substitution method and still more to make a total of $70 - 2$ hits in 184 trials which was what Mr Shackleton did on 6 January, 1943, with J. Al. as agent. Unless he knows how to make an average of 10.3 successful substitutions per sheet over four sheets I really fail to see how it is to be done.

In reply to Dr West (p. 342 of same *Journal*) I did not receive any details of the clock-card experiment at the time when I received the five-symbol scoring sheets and to this day I do not remember seeing them. The impression I had was that the experiment was a mere diversion and now I learn that only 36 guesses were made. Surely a meagre number of trials on which to draw any conclusions whatever? When we remember that it frequently took the boys at least four or five runs (100 guesses) before they got into their stride with the five-symbol cards, we can hardly wonder at their failure at the onset with this quite unfamiliar material; very monotonous and lacking in any kind of colourful interest.

S. G. SOAL

SIR,—I strongly deplore devoting the Society's slender resources to publishing such material as constitutes the bulk of Part 190 of the *Proceedings*, i.e. Mr C. E. M. Hansel's implied charges of fraud against Dr S. G. Soal and his helpers, with Dr Soal's reply. Defects in experiments or calculations or proven

errors or deceit are of course legitimate material for a scientific publication, but not unsupported accusations or unreasoned prejudice. Mr Hansel's assumption of universal corruption in university personnel did not apply in his university when I was on its staff (before he arrived). Not having found it either in those in which I have served since, I consider his assumptions as wild as the other extreme of assuming universal integrity and infallibility.

As Dr Soal says, it is obvious that Mr Hansel belongs to the large category of minds that will accept or postulate anything but telepathy, and it seems profitless to pile up further elementary evidence of its existence. Minds impervious to the evidence already accumulated will never be changed, except perhaps by a cataclysm. Cannot the time and energy at present devoted to establishing the elementary fact of telepathy *ad nauseam* be turned instead to studying the mental, psychological and physical make-up of well-authenticated sensitives, and so learning more about how and in what conditions the fact works?

V. P. UNDERWOOD

(Mr Underwood is not the only one satiated with accounts of the Hansel-Soal controversy. But it is deemed essential that no one should be able to conclude that the Society was unwilling to ventilate any serious criticism of its members' researches.—Ed.)

The Shackleton Report

SIR,—Readers of the Basil Shackleton report ('Experiments in Precognitive Telepathy', *Proc.*, 47, 1943) will remember that we tried out several people as agents and that two people besides the main agent (R.E.) were successful. One of these was Mr J.Al., the other was Mrs G.A., who attended two sittings, at the second of which the very interesting 'Double Agent' experiment was carried out (op. cit. p. 60). As there have been surmises as to why she was dropped after the second sitting when she had proved so successful; as these enquiries have lately recurred, and as it has been brought to our attention that a sentence in the report is misleading,¹ we have decided to publish the following statement. This account is based on very full notes made at the time by K.M.G.

¹ This sentence reads: 'A number of persons witnessed the successful scoring and all testified to the fraud-proof character of the methods employed.' (op. cit. p. 36). This remark is strictly true of all the observers, twenty-one in number, who assisted in the experiments. G.A. was not an observer (or witness) but acted as an agent, in the same way as R.E. and J.Al. None of these three agents are listed among the witnesses on p. 145 of the report. Nevertheless, the remark as it stands may be considered misleading. For the very favourable testimony of the witnesses see the report p. 80 ff.

Statement regarding two sittings attended by Mrs G.A. on 16 May, 1941 and 23 May, 1941

Whilst S.G.S. was looking out for people to try out as agents with B.S., he asked K.M.G. if she could suggest anybody. She suggested Mrs G.A. She and her husband were, and still are, personal friends of K.M.G.'s. Mrs G.A. attended for the first time at sitting No. 15, at which K.M.G. was also present. After this sitting Mrs G.A. asked K.M.G. whether Shackleton took drugs and related that she had seen three cigarettes lying loose on his table together and had taken one, remarking to him 'I have taken one of your cigarettes.' He looked surprised, she said. She started smoking it 'and felt shortly as if she would faint; her mind had a feeling of being somewhat drugged, and she had to put the cigarette out and throw it away,' and thereafter developed a headache. This was her description and we can only comment that we had no reason to believe B.S. used drugged cigarettes or took drugs in any form. During the course of over two years' experiments with B.S. many persons must have smoked his cigarettes, including K.M.G. But at no time was any similar comment made by anybody else.

Unfortunately K.M.G. was unable to be present at the next sitting, No. 16, at which G.A. again acted as agent. At this sitting Dr B. P. Wiesner, D.Sc., Ph.D., (an Austrian resident by birth, in England) attended as observer. On K.M.G.'s return to London, G.A. told K.M.G. that at this last sitting she had seen S.G.S. 'altering the figures' several times on a score-sheet, observing this through the small aperture of the screen placed between the agent and the experimenter who showed the agent the cards (op. cit. p. 38).

K.M.G. was very taken aback at such a statement and proceeded to make the fullest investigation privately, without at this stage informing S.G.S. She asked G.A. what she had said or done when she noticed this. G.A. said she had not liked to do anything, as K.M.G. was not there. She said she did murmur 'What are you doing?', but since nobody took any notice, she said no more, neither did she at the time, or later, say anything at all to Dr Wiesner.¹ (It would have been perfectly possible for G.A. to speak to him in German, her native language and his, had she wished to say something which S.G.S. would not understand.) K.M.G. asked G.A. if she could indicate on what sheets the

¹ Dr Wiesner has recently confirmed that G.A. said nothing at all to him at the time and that he had not heard of the allegation before being told of it in June, 1960. He placed no reliance at all on the statement in its implication as he had approached the experiments in a very critical and sceptical state of mind and had formed a very favourable impression of the care and precautions taken. He had watched the proceedings most carefully himself, as instructed to do, and had seen nothing amiss.

figures had been altered; she thought it was on the first sheet.

K.M.G. then asked S.G.S. to bring to the next sitting all the score-sheets of sitting 16 for her to see, since she would be interested to see the scores achieved in her absence. S.G.S. duly brought them along, still unaware of the allegations made. K.M.G. examined them minutely for any sign of alterations. She could see none and, since the figures were written in ink, alterations might have shown up clearly. She then gave the score-sheets to a friend, Miss Olive Stewart, personal secretary to Mr H. W. S. Wright, a London surgeon. Miss Stewart was a most careful and reliable person with whom K.M.G. had worked on medical records. K.M.G. told her of the assertion that the figures on the score-sheets had been altered, though she did not mention at that time S.G.S.'s name. Miss Stewart also subjected all the score-sheets of sitting 16 to very careful scrutiny, was quite unable to detect any signs of alterations, and gave K.M.G. a signed statement to this effect.

When told about it, S.G.S. was extremely indignant that such remarks should have been made, particularly since no steps were taken at the time to ask him what he was doing; when nothing had been said to Dr Wiesner, the witness, which he might have looked into at the time; and when subsequent examination of the score-sheets showed no sign of anything suspicious. He insisted that K.M.G. should make perfectly clear to G.A. the seriousness of such remarks and that he would have no hesitation in resorting to legal action if he heard of such statements being repeated. He also refused to have G.A. at any further experiments.

When the report came to be written, we discussed whether or no to describe this incident. K.M.G. was in favour of including a description of the matter in one of the appendices to the report, but S.G.S. decided against any mention of it. He was conscious of the responsibility which rests on anyone who has to decide whether to hand over to a hostile critic or to withhold from him a bit of information which he reckons that that critic is likely to use unfairly if it is made available to him.

Some critics leave no stone unturned to imagine combinations of fraud; even the observers, brought in to check the agent, are postulated as being 'in the trick'; and honest observers are presumed to be half-wits who never have either the intelligence or the good fortune to detect cheating in those they have been instructed to watch. What misfortune attends the honest observer, in the manipulation of the story by such a critic! Never do his eyes turn in the right direction at the right moment, no, not in years of experiments; and how different from the dishonest ob-

server and the dishonest experimenter whose quick wits achieve their wicked ends every time! It was with this type of critic in mind, of which he had even then had some experience, that S.G.S., bearing in mind the lack of any supporting evidence for Mrs G.A.'s statement, was unwilling to turn attention away from the remarkable pattern of apparently precognitive scoring in the B.S. experiments and to draw a red herring across so interesting a track.

Comments

It is obvious that G.A. had every right, in fact a duty, to keep her eyes wide open and satisfy herself that all was in order. She thought she saw S.G.S. altering some figures, and would have been acting correctly immediately to query his actions and receive an explanation—both her query and S.G.S.'s explanation being thus brought to the attention of the observer, Dr Wiesner. But though K.M.G. sympathizes with G.A.'s reluctance to 'kick up a fuss' amongst strangers with scientific attainments, it is obvious that this reluctance produced a very serious state of affairs.

It would be unfair to all concerned not to remark that G.A. whilst reaffirming now her impressions at that time, fully realizes, and herself has stated, that she might have been mistaken in what she thought she saw. We must point out that her impression might have had a very natural explanation. For in the course of writing down a large number of figures during experiments, one is apt to lose neatness to a minor extent, and almost everyone has the habit of occasionally going over and reshaping ill-formed letters or figures.

Finally, taking the experiments as a whole, it would seem extremely unlikely that an experimenter would risk altering the records during the course of the experiment with an observer standing by, or that he would get away with such a procedure without being observed by any one of the other witnesses, twenty-one in all, invited to watch and check the Basil Shackleton experiments.

(signed) S. G. SOAL (6 July, 1960)

K. M. GOLDNEY (8 July, 1960)

EXCERPTA

From the American Newsletter in the New Scientist of 2 June, 1960.

The Newsletter quotes from an article by Dr W. F. G. Swann, Director Emeritus of the Bartol Research Foundation of the

Franklin Institute at Swarthmore, Pa., appearing in the *Journal of the Franklin Institute*, Vol. 269, No. 3.

A miracle is defined by Dr Swann as 'a thing of such unusual occurrence that the fact of its having occurred at all is open to doubt. . . . Practically all the phenomena of the atomic world would indeed be miracles to any supposed inhabitants of the atom. . . . If, in imagination you lived on one of the atoms which compose the part of the X-ray tube from which the X-rays come, so rare would be the emission of a ray from an individual atom that you would be put in an atomic lunatic asylum if, as a resident of such an atom, you maintained that any such phenomenon had ever occurred.'

Because there are so many atoms human physicists are able to observe a strong emission of X-rays from the X-ray tube. What would be a miracle to the resident of the atom is thus no longer a miracle to him who observes a multitude of atoms. Similarly: 'Passing through this room, a cosmic ray detaches an electron from an atom here and there. . . . Yet, to the individual atom, this theft of an electron by a cosmic ray is such a rare event that the chance of its happening to any particular atom in the period of, let us say, a day, is no more than the chance that one of us would be murdered in that day if, with the Earth at its present population, only one murder were committed in 300 years.'

All the happenings of atomic physics are equally miraculous. . . . 'Yet it is these miraculous happenings which, in their totality, produce all the interesting things which our coarse-grained senses observe. And to these coarse-grained senses there is no miracle.'

Dr Swann goes on to argue for a point of view that will encompass 'the problem of the nature of life and all that goes with it . . . we have a clue in what has happened in the domain of atomic structure.' As long as the atom was thought to be an indivisible entity, little was learned about the laws that relate one natural element to another. Then the proton and electron were discovered . . . 'at least a promise of further understanding.' Some scientists postulated the existence of a neutral particle. . . . 'Conservative science hesitated to accept this. The principle that all atomic forces were electrical had almost come to be regarded as self-evident. How then could a neutral particle exert a force on anything . . . how could it be influenced by anything? . . .

'When the neutron was at last discovered science became disturbed by the fact that the presence of the neutron represented a new set of relationships between things. One had to admit what are called nuclear forces as distinct from electromagnetic forces—a new world of law and order. . . .'

In contemplating harmonization of the living and dead worlds Dr Swann does not expect to find a new cementing particle. But he does expect discovery of a new set of laws and *recognition of a new entity* (my italics—Ed.) that will help to explain such things as extra-sensory perception, clairvoyance and man's historic concern with immortality. This new entity may not be described in terms of space of time and Dr Swann is not willing to suggest for it a name as foggy as 'soul'.

From 'The Rediscovery of Mind' an article by Joseph H. Rush in 'The Humanist', May-June, 1960.

No misconception in science is quite so damaging as the notion that a scientific theory or idea must 'make sense', that it must be a corollary of the prevailing system of belief. Actually, any great advance, any departure in thought sufficiently novel to initiate a fresh synthesis of data and ideas, necessarily must *not* make sense. It must force a break with habitual concepts, and that break is painful. The Michelson-Morley experiment on propagation of light made no sense, but it gave Einstein the clue for that insult to common sense called relativity theory. Bohr's notion of quantized electron orbits in atoms made no sense, but it predicted the wave lengths of spectral lines with uncanny accuracy. Sea shells on mountaintops made no sense, but such anomalies forced man unwillingly to the magnificent concept of universal evolution. . . . The psi phenomena make no sense whatever. Yet they rest on such firm evidence that even some of those who reject them acknowledge the data would be wholly convincing if their implications were less shocking. It is precisely because these curious phenomena make no sense in terms of prevailing scientific ideas that I believe they are of paramount importance.

NOTICES

OUR Ex-President, Professor C. D. Broad, Professor Emeritus of Moral Philosophy at Trinity College, Cambridge, was, on 1 June, 1960, awarded the Nicholas Murray Butler gold medal by Columbia University. The medal is awarded for the most distinguished contribution during a five-year period to philosophy or educational theory.

A member of the Society, Mr Timothy d'Arch Smith, is undertaking the task of compiling a bibliography of the occult to cover

books in English printed here or abroad (but excluding the U.S.A.) and dating from the invention of printing to the present day. He has already notes of approximately 15,000 titles for referencing. He would be grateful for any help members could give him in making the compilation. Enquiries should be addressed to him at 92 Langford Court, London, N.W.8.

A new book by Mr W. H. Salter, entitled *Zoar, or the Evidence of Psychical Research concerning Survival*, is to be published shortly. It is hoped to arrange that members may have the privilege of purchasing it at special rates.

F. W. Faxon Company, Inc., 83 Francis Street, Boston, Mass., U.S.A. have ceased to be the American agents of the Society. In future will American members kindly pay their subscriptions direct to the Secretary of the S.P.R., 1 Adam & Eve Mews, Kensington, London, W.8, and order the Society's publications direct from its London office.